

LETTERS

OF THE

MARCHIONESS

DE SÉVIGNÉ.

VOL. VI.

LETTER CCCCXXII.

TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

Wednesday Morning, 28 July 1677.

I AM now at Paris, on account of the troublesome affair which I told you of; I have not yet entirely crushed the butterfly; that is, I have not yet received the mighty sum I mentioned to you. I should have been quite in despair, if I had not been agreeably amused since Sunday, by taking leave of those gentlemen who are going to Grignan. I proposed to have returned yesterday, but I shall not go till Friday; 'tis impossible to explain to you the torment of chicanery. I supped yesterday with the Marchioness of Huxelles, where I, for the sixth time, embraced la Garde, and the Abbé de Grignan, and instead of saying to them, gentlemen, I am sorry for your departure, I said, gentlemen, how great is your happiness! how glad am I that you are going! Go, go see my daughter, you will impart joy to her soul, you will restore her to her health; she is beautiful, gay, and easy in her behaviour; would to God, I could be of the party. Alas, providence has not thought proper so to order things! But, in a word, my dear, I have received the most positive assurances that you are in good health! Montgobert does not impose upon me; however, repeat it to me once more; write to me concerning it both in verse and prose, repeat it to me thirty times over; let every echo

resound the joyful news: if I had a band of musick, like M. de Grignan, that news should make the subject of an opera. 'Tis true indeed I cannot, without transport, think of the miracle which God has worked in your favour; I am quite out of humour with human prudence: I can recollect some efforts made by her, which well deserve to be laughed at; she will now be in disrepute for ever. Can you conceive the joy which I shall feel, if I see you again with that amiable countenance which delights me, a reasonable share of fat, and a gaiety which is always the effect of a benevolent disposition? When beholding you shall give me a pleasure, equal to the poignant sensations of grief which it gave me before; when I shall see you, such as you should be at your age, and not worn, consumed, wasted, inflamed, exhausted, dried up; in a word, when I shall have only the ordinary ills of human life to suffer; if I ever have that satisfaction, I then may justly boast, that I have felt the extremes both of good and evil. Your example, however, causes destruction on every side: the Duke of Sully says to the Dutchess; you are indisposed, come to Sully; do but consider, Madame de Grignan, the tranquillity of her own house has restored her health without her taking any remedy. But the Dutchess does not approve of this prescription, she prefers that of Vesou, who advises her in the first place, to loose blood three times, then to take two gentle doses of physick, and then to bathe during twenty days successively: I must own I cannot comprehend this opposite extreme, at such a season as the present, and in such a place as Sully, at least before all saints. I saw her yesterday, and she spoke very kindly of you. I am sorry you have wrote so long a letter, in order to persuade me, that you are not under any necessity of taking remedies, as you find yourself in perfect health. I am of your opinion, perhaps milk may be hurtful to you; regulate your conduct by your own experience, ease and time contribute to your recovery, I consent to their having the whole honour of the cure. Would to God that the same reasoning would hold with regard to me, if that were the case, I should not go to Vichi: but I don't fancy you would willingly dispense with my going;

going; the precaution to you appears necessary, and as it is impossible to guess, whether it will be productive of any good effect or no, I shall make no change in my resolutions, so that after passing a few days more at Livri, and a few days more at Paris, in order to protract the time to the 17th, I shall set out by the road of d'Espoises. It has been customary with our family, to marry their daughters to gentlemen of the long robe; were it not for us, the gentlemen of the long robe would have no wives; we have been told, upon two occasions, that our alliance was not desired, because our's was a military family; I think we would do well to follow your advice, and instead of quitting the long robe for the sword, quit the sword for the long robe. My son is in great perplexity, he cannot put his heel to the ground; but the long time this wound has lasted, whilst he has no sort of complaint in any other part of the body, has rendered his stay suspicious to those, who seem to have been sent into the world for nothing but to prate. His conduct is quite unexceptionable, and yet he is so unfortunate as to be censured. The reputation of men, appears to me to be more tender and delicate than that of women, eternal apologies avail my son nothing; so that tho' he is not able to get on horseback, they will have him join the army. I earnestly desire that his leg should be inspected by Monf. Felix*. Monf. Felix is not at leisure, and thus the time slips away. D—— was yesterday lodged in the bastille, for having, at the house of the Countess of Soissons, lifted his cane against L——, and struck him, tho' but slightly; the Count de Gramont interposed, the menaces thrown out were very loud, L—— told D——, that he was a coward, and that he would not have made such a disturbance elsewhere. The Countess went to the King to complain of this outrage committed in her house. The King told her, she should have done herself justice. The Cardinal de Bonzi made her an apology for D——: she told him, that the affair was left entirely to the King, and that if she had been at home at the time, she would have caused D—— to be thrown out of the window. D——

* First Surgeon to the King.

is still at the Bassile, many compliments are made upon this occasion: I would gladly pay a visit to the wife of L——, and make D—— a compliment; however, I will not do so, if you don't approve of it. The quarrel was occasioned by eight hundred louis d'ors, which L—— owes to D——, and which he would have had him draw upon the Duke of Orleans for. The expressions that passed between them were, you shall pay me yourself; I will not; and such like. People are so eager for news, that they have catched at this trivial affair, and now nothing else is talked of. Madame de la Fayette is still indisposed; however, we cannot help thinking that she comes up the Rhone slowly, and with great difficulty; 'tis not the road to Grignan, your advice will not be followed. I have nothing to say of Paulina, but what I have wrote you already; I love her, even at this distance, she is beautiful as an angel, make her a constant object of delight to you; there are certain philosophical opinions which avail us nothing, and which nobody thanks us for adhering to. 'Tis true, you must leave her as a pledge when you quit Grignan; but then she should be only left as a deposit, and in that case your sister-in-law is a properer person for her to be entrusted with, than the sisters of St. Mary's convent, for they will make a difficulty of returning her again. Is the poor little girl at Aix in good health? I often think of her, and of the little Marquis, whose parts I'm afraid will rust for want of a tutor: but how is it possible to send one from a place so distant, you should chuse him yourself. La Mouffe wrote to me from Lyons, that he'll go to Grignan to pay you a visit; that's good enough, his company will be of great service to your child; the thought pleased me highly. Some time after Corbinelli, a gentleman arrived here from Commerci, who filled me with apprehensions for the Cardinal's health; he can no longer be said to live, but to languish: I so highly love and esteem this worthy prelate, that this information gives me the greatest uneasiness; time has made no alteration in my sentiments with regard to him; the only effect it has hitherto had upon me, was to increase my tenderness and affection for you; I assure you, it exerts its whole power

power that way : but you are cruel yourself, in contributing to it as much as you do ; there's a sort of malice in this, you love me, and give me constant proofs of your affection ; my heart gives itself up entirely to this joy, and is more and more convinced in the sentiments which are natural to it ; you may easily judge of the consequences of that. In other families, I every where see children that hate their mothers ; C*** told me t'other day, that he hated his like the plague ; as well as I can remember, she died the same day ; I waited upon him yesterday to pay my compliments of condolance, but he was not at home. I wrote him as proper a letter as I could upon the occasion ; he is in deep mourning, but his heart is replete with joy and exultation. Alas, my dear child, you are quite in the other extreme, and I, in return, love you, as in duty bound, more than my life itself.

Isis has returned to the Dutchess of Orleans, beautiful as an angel as before. For my part, I wish she was rather at a distance than near. The only general topic of conversation at present, is the gaiety of Fontainebleau.

L E T T E R. CCCCXXIII.

To the same.

Paris, Friday, 30 July, 1677.

WHENEVER I write you a long letter, you are alarmed for my health, thinking that application may prove prejudicial to me ; when I write you short ones, you think I am sick in good earnest. How do you think I intend to do ? — Why just as I have done all along. When I sit down to write, I never know how I shall end ; I don't know whether my letter will prove concise or prolix ; I write as long as my pen can move, that is my only rule for composition, and I can't help thinking it a just one ; it suits my natural indolence, and I shall continue to observe it. Don't be under any apprehensions concerning my health, since you would not have me solicitous with regard to yours. If I was to follow my own inclinations, I should cease to drink the waters of Vitti, as you have left off drinking milk :
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but as you are of opinion, that this regimen may be of service to me, and as I am sure it can do me no harm, I am resolved to take a trip to Vichi; and I have fixed upon the day of my departure in a manner so determinate, that I should look upon it as ominous not to go: I hope providence will not permit me to be disappointed this time. I have been so long used to disappointments, that I always tremble when I speak of future events. The sceptical stile pleases me highly; their doubts discover a great deal of prudence, or, at least, they screen them from reproach. Should I be address'd in this manner, are you going to Vichi? In their stile I should answer, it is possible. Should they ask again, do you take a house in the royal square for a year? I should tell them, I don't know; in this doubtful manner we should always speak. I thought I should return to Livri this morning; for the grand affair is at last concluded, my law suit is ended. tho' not quite so well as I thought it would; nine thousand livres were due to me, and I received but two. So then I might have gone home quietly, but the devil would not miss such an opportunity; the Abbe Zetu, and the little de Villacreau laid a wager of four pistoles, and with these four pistoles we are to see the comedy of the Visionaries, which I never saw before. Madame des Coulanges presses me in so engaging a manner, that I can't possibly refuse, and so I must defer till to-morrow, what I should have done to-day. I don't know whether you are aware of the nature of these foibles, for my part, I have many such; however, I must make an effort to reform as I grow old.

D—— is released from the bastille. As he was imprison'd for no other reason but to make satisfaction to the Countess of Soissons, and as neither the King of France, or the King of Spain were interested in the affair, she did not think proper to let her resentment last above four and twenty hours. The difference will be accommodated before the Maréchals of France. This is a little hard upon D——, he must declare that he gave no blows, and put up with all the abuse he received. Such a proceeding is so disagreeable, that a certain person, whom you know very well, said, that
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when gamesters have so much patience, they should yield an implicit obedience to the cards.

Madame de Schomberg has at last sold her place * to Montanegré for fourscore thousand crowns, having received two hundred and ten thousand livres in ready money, and an assignment of thirty thousand livres, to be levied at the next assembly of the states of Languedoc; this is very well, but I have something still better to add, for 'tis not so much actions, as the manner of doing them, that we are struck with. When she returned the King thanks, he told her, that she was always complaining of her bad state of health, and that she appeared to him very handsome notwithstanding. Your Majesty, answered she, sets no bounds to your favours, you make me a grant of fourscore thousand crowns, and at the same time pay me compliments. Madam, said the King, I don't apprehend that you will increase the furniture of your house by the purchase of a strong box. To which she replied, I shall not even see the money that your Majesty gives me. From this Mons. de Louvois joined in the conversation in the same pleasant strain, and the raillery was continued for about a quarter of an hour very agreeably. It seems Madame de Schomberg, said two or three very good things; from whence the King took occasion to pay her this compliment. Madam, you may justly think me vain, when I tell you, that I would have sworn that you would make that very answer. Madame de Montespan too said the most obliging things imaginable to her. Thus are folks treated at court; when a favour is done there, it is enhanced by the pleasing manner in which it is conferred. The Marchioness, whom I saw yesterday, speaks of you in the most favourable and friendly manner: she says, she regrets the loss of your company, and could wish that you had received as handsome a present as she. The extraordinary pleasures of Fontainebleau are much talked of; 'tis a place that I can't help looking upon as dangerous: I think old intrigues should no more be moved from one place to another, than old people. The continuance of the

* The place of Lieutenant General of the province of Languedoc.

attachment is often chiefly owing to habit; when they undergo any change, they are in danger of expiring. Madame des Coulanges is strongly importuned to go to Fontainebleau; she declines it on account of the expence, for she could not avoid purchasing three or four new suits. She is pressed to go, even in a suit of black; this greatly diminishes the expence. The Maréchal de Crequi has been very much indisposed; he was given to understand, that if his disorder increased, he might leave the command of the army to the Maréchal de Schomberg. Did you never hear of lame people, whom fire or a dog has forced to run as fast as mountaineers? Thus it happened on this occasion; the name of the Maréchal de Schomberg, like a specifick, immediately restored the Maréchal de Crequi to perfect health. He'll no longer counterfeit the sick man, and we shall soon see how he'll deal with the Germans. The coadjutor has had very good success in the affair of his woods, he will be permitted to sell them; he seems to be in favour with Monsr. Colbert; he's an happy man that can't be denied. He dined with me yesterday, the name of Grignan has a surprizing effect upon me. 'Tis to that Count, you owe my friendship for you; are you not glad to see that dear face again, if it looks as well as I am informed it does? Preserve that precious health, we are never easy when it is in the declining condition in which we have seen it: this idea always torments me. Give me leave to recommend Paulina to you, I make no doubt that she is very pretty, and will be like her mother; what do you think of such a resemblance? If my daughter leaves Grignan, I approve of her leaving her with your sister, upon condition that she shall be at liberty to take her back again; for this the sisters of St. Mary's convent might make some objection to. This, my dear child, is what I had to write to you. On Wednesday I answer two of your letters, on Friday I prattle upon whatever occurs. The Baron is in high spirits, and though he can't stand upon his heel, he appears so little to be an object of compassion, that he is to be pitied for that very reason. 'Tis a perplexing situation, to be obliged to justify one's self upon certain subjects.

Madame

MARCHIONESS DE SEVIGNE. 209

Madame de Villars has wrote me a long letter about you; I'll send you her letters one time or other, they will divert you greatly. Madame d'Hendicourt is in great spirits at Niquée, she there forgets that she is upon the point of lying-in. The Prince d'Elbeuf is extremely agreeable. Mademoiselle de Thianges is a great beauty, and is particularly assiduous in paying her court. Madame de Montespan was t'other day all covered over with diamonds; the lustre of so bright a divinity was enough to dazzle one. Their attachment is stronger than ever; kind looks pass between them every moment: never was passion known to gain ground like this. Madame de la Fayette continues to travel on gently by the Rhone; and I, my daughter, love you with a constancy, equal to that, with which the so much celebrated river flows from Lyons to the sea. This is somewhat poetical, but it is not for that reason the less true.

L E T T E R CCCXXIV.

To the Same.

Livri, Tuesday, 3 August, 1677.

I ARRIVED here on Saturday morning, as I told you before. The comedy * we saw on last Friday entertained us highly: it appeared to us to be a general representation of all human kind; every one has his visions, some more, some less, extravagant. One of mine, at present, is an unceasing attachment to this beautiful Abbé †, which I admire as much as if I had never seen it before, and can't but think that you are greatly obliged to me, when I quit it in order to go to Vichi. This is one of those obligations with which I reproach the good Abbé, when I have wrote two or three letters of business to Bretagne. You don't say a word about your health, and yet 'tis a thing by no means to be neglected; you will never recover as long as you continue thin; and whether it proceeds from a blood over-heated and rarefied, you have great reason to apprehend that your juices will be dried up. I

* The Visionaries by Desmaretz.

† Madame de Vaudemont.

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should be glad, therefore, if you could be prevailed on to take a good deal of exercise, provided the fear of growing fat does not occasion you the same affliction that it did last year ; for every thing should be taken into consideration : but this fear can't enter into the head of a reasonable person, more than once. I find you have better spectacles than the Abbé, you certainly see how I behave, when I expect a letter from you ; I take several turns upon the little bridge. I quite lose the chearful gaiety of my daughter, and possessed with the peevish temper of my mother, keep a constant look out, to see whether the footman's coming. Then I go back again, and place myself at the end of the alley which leads to the little bridge ; and after having several times gone backwards in this manner, I at last see the dear letter arrive ; I receive it, and read it with feelings which you can, doubtless, form an idea of, for with your spectacles you can see into every thing. I expect the second this evening, and will write an answer to it to-morrow. The good Abbé is greatly surprized that your journeys to Aix and Marseilles, and paying the guards, should prove so expensive to you ; you tell me, that your castle is a great resource, there I agree with you ; but I would rather make it my place of residence through choice than necessity. You know what the Abbé d'Effiat says, that he has married his mistress ; he was extremely fond of Veret, before he was obliged to live there ; but now that he dare not quit the place, he can no longer bear to live in it. In a word, daughter, I advise you to follow all the good resolutions you have formed, with regard to conduct and œconomy ; this does not restore a family to its former splendor, but it makes life less tedious and insipid.

I have not seen the daughters of M. de Lissebonne, but I believe they are not as handsome as the sisters of your Princess. She * is still at Chaillot, her mother is with child, and as much ashamed as if she had committed a fault. I have already returned you thanks, my lovely daughter, for all the favours you have conferred upon my old friends. You must certainly have perceived, how sensibly Madame de Lavardin was affected

* Madame de Vaudemont.

with your goodness. Madame de Morbeuf, who is now here, sends you her best respects; she is highly delighted with that pretty little place; she says, it has no resemblance to any thing she has ever seen before. My friend Corbinelli is likewise with me; he intends to settle the controversy between you concerning the epic poetry.

Wednesday Morning.

I have received your letter of the 28th of July: you seem to have been in a merry mood when you wrote it, and cheerfulness in a sign of health; dear daughter, this is my way of reasoning. You press me to go to Grignan, you talk of your melons, your figs, and your fruits of all kinds; for my part, I should gladly eat of them, but it is not the divine pleasure, that I should make so agreeable a journey this year; nor will you take a trip to Vichi either. You tell me, my dear child, that your friendship is not entirely visible in certain circumstances; I may say the same of mine, so that we should mutually give each other credit upon this article: I see yours clearly, and I am satisfied likewise with regard to mine; this is one of those things which are easily believed, because they are true; and one of those truths which are established easily, because they are truths. I had heard some indistinct account of that same letter of M. de Montausier; I agree with you, in thinking he acted in a manner every way worthy of himself; you know how high an opinion I have of his virtues. An attempt was made to deceive him, and those that undertook it succeeded so far, as to make him disguise his language, however, they stopped there, and so did he. This is an example of sincerity, an honourable behaviour, worthy of the knight's of old time. One thing is decided, my daughter, you are sure of having those young ladies *; as you are so many good heads met together, it can admit of no doubt, but you will hit upon the best course, and that which is best calculated to promote your interests; perhaps they may square with mine, this would give me high satisfaction.

* The young ladies of the Grignan family, were the nieces of the Dutchess of Montausier.

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I don't wonder at the joy of the worthy Abbé, at seeing himself in the castle of his forefathers, which every day becomes more beautiful and regular. Mons. de la Garde, of whom I speak with pleasure, because I have a regard for him, gave occasion to those copies which have made me so uneasy. I assure you, that if it had not been for him, I should have continued my brutality, I resisted interest, but I could not avoid yielding to friendship. If I was but in the twentieth year of my age, I would not discover these foibles to him. So I passed through a crowd, whilst every body round made an outcry against me. She is mad, said they, she is jealous, does not Mons. de St. Geran love his wife? yet he has permitted copies of her picture to be taken. Then I am resolved I'll have an original, that shall not be refused me. 'Tis pleasant enough that she should think, that no one but herself has a right to the picture of her daughter. I am resolved, I'll have a finer one than she. All this clamour would have given me no uneasiness, if Mons. de la Garde had not joined in it; however, I bore it as well as I could, and now they may say what they please. You would laugh heartily, if you knew all the vexation that this affair has given me. Though you are not fond of portrait-painting, I took it for granted you would be the first to turn me into ridicule. 'Tis somewhat pleasant too, that this original no longer appears to me either entire or precious; this is the occasion of great grief to me, but we must expect to be mortified in every thing. The business is done, so let us talk no more about it; this article is long and useless enough, but I could no more resist giving vent to my uneasiness, than keep my poor picture to myself.

I expect my son shortly, he is preparing to join the army, it was not possible for him to do otherwise, and I hope he will lay aside all delays, that he may have the full merit of so noble a resolution. What you tell me of him excites admiration; true it is, that a man who is not in love, is the most busy creature in the world, before he waited upon Madame de —, Madame de —, Madame de —, and Madame de —, both the day and night slip away. I remember my son once made this answer, to a person who censured the fair Sabliere

Sabliere for inconstancy; no, no, she still loves her dear Philadelphus, 'tis true, indeed, to make their love the more lasting, they do not visit as often as they did formerly, and instead of twelve hours, he now does not pass above seven or eight at a time in her company; but tenderness, passion, kindness, and perfect fidelity, are still in possession of the fair one's heart, and whoever says the contrary, says a falsehood. But let us speak now of that truant heart, which you no longer look upon yourself as possessed of. I am inclined to think it is the heart of Roquante, and that Father Brocar has meddled a little unreasonably with that friendship: I ask it as a favour that you will let me know whether I am in the right or not. There is another person in the world, whom tenderness aspires, as you say, to equal mine; to speak the truth, I see no difference between them; and what will surprize you still more, I am not in the least jealous; on the contrary, it gives me a joy inexpressible, and doubles my friendship and attachment to him.

I can easily conceive the pleasure it would give you, to see your brother married: I am thoroughly acquainted with your heart, and know very well how it would be affected by any thing of so extraordinary a nature: it is not a little so either, that you should not recover your rest and health till after you had left me; but the sincerity with which you own it, is worthy of you, and I am so well pleased, at hearing that you have your health better, than when you were here, that I shall not quarrel with you upon that account. However, I don't doubt but M. de Grignan may call you to account, for the liberty you take in censuring his musick; you, who are a mere novice in the art, in comparison to him. Lord! what an agreeable autumn you will pass, what agreeable company you will have! Unhappily for myself, I am but too well convinced, that I should be welcome there; judge then the effect this thought will have upon me, when I am within two and twenty leagues of Lyons. Farewel, my dearest child, be sure to give my best compliments to the Count, the worthy Abbé, and la Garde, who knows so well how to seduce me.

LETTER

L E T T E R CCCCXXV.

To the same.

Livri, Friday, 6 August, 1677.

IFANCY my letter will be but short this time; that I wrote to you on Wednesday was the reverse. Madame de Morbeuf that day gave place to Madame des Coulanges. Brancas, and the faithful Achates, who the very same evening began to wrangle with Brancas upon the subject of janenism, for Brancas is never a molinist, except when I find myself at a loss, and then he treacherously leaves me to defend the cause of the holy Father St. Augustin alone. They wrangled to some purpose, and Brancas being told, that there was not much charity, in the stile of certain little letters, published upon the subject, immediately drew the book out of his pocket, and made it appear, that it had been customary in all ages to combat heresies and erroneous opinions in that manner. He was told, that things sacred were there treated in a ludicrous manner; he then read the eleventh of those divine letters, in which the author fully proves, that they themselves turn things sacred into a jest. In a word, we took great pleasure in hearing the book read. It was something extraordinary to see the convulsions of prejudice expiring by the force of truth and reason. This amusement was next day succeeded by another. Madame des Coulanges, who was so obliging as to come here, in order to pay me a visit, kindly communicated to us some of the stories, which are told to amuse the ladies of Versailles; this is called lulling them; she then lulled us, and told us of a green island, in which a Princess was brought up more beautiful than the light itself; the fairies breath'd upon her every moment. The Prince of Delights was her lover: they both arrived one day in a chrystal carriage, at the court of the King of Delights; it was an admirable sight, every body looked up, and could not forbear singing, Come, come, let us haste together, our Goddess Cybele descends. This story takes up an hour in the telling, I leave out a considerable part of it, because, as I understand,

derstand, this green island is in the ocean; you are not obliged to know what passes there, had it been in the Mediterranean, I would have told all, as it would doubtless be a discovery, M. de Grignan would be very glad to be made acquainted with. We don't hear any news at all, gallantry, and the concerns of the gay world, are entirely banished by Mars. Your brother, apprehensive lest he should not find an opportunity of exerting himself, is resolved to go directly to the army; he will go to Bourbon in October, if there should be occasion. The reputation of these military gentlemen is so tender, that they had rather do too much than too little.

Mademoiselle de Meri sends you some exceeding handsome shoes; there is one pair that is so nice, that I think one might lie in it; do you remember that this piece of folly made you laugh one evening? To conclude, no longer return me thanks, daughter, for the trifling services I do you; consider the motive that gives rise to my actions: no one returns thanks for being tenderly loved, your own heart must teach you another sort of gratitude.

LETTER CCCCXXVI.

To the same.

Paris, Tuesday Evening, 10 August, 1677.

YOU will not this time have any reason to complain, that I send you no news. The report of the siege of Charleroy, has made all the young fellows run, and even the lame themselves. My son sets out to-morrow in a chaise, without any attendants: all those who tell him he ought not to go, would be extremely surprized, if he should stay at home. It is highly praise-worthy in him to make such an effort to his duty. But do you know who are gone besides him? Only the Duke de les Diguieres, the Marquis de Cœvres, Dungeau, la Fare, la Fare himself, the Prince d'Elbeuf, M. de Marsan, little de Villarceaux, and God knows how many more. I forgot M. de Louvois, who set out last Saturday. Many are of opinion, that nothing will result from all this hurry, but a delay of the journey

journey to Fontainebleau. M. de Vins, the whole body of musqueteers, and a considerable number of soldiers, have entered Charleroy, so that it is thought, that as the army commanded by M. de Luxembourg, is augmented by many regiments just come out of garrison, the Prince of Orange will hardly attempt to lay siege to the town. Do you remember an affair of this nature, of which we wrote a lamentable account, which did not come to hand till five or six days after the siege was raised? Perhaps they may go more gently to work this time, and think it sufficient to invest the town-house: you will soon know the result of this affair. The departure of these undaunted warriors is at present the chief object of the public attention. I returned yesterday from Livri, in order to take my leave of my son, and prepare for my departure on Monday. But I must here inform you of a death that will surprise you, the death of poor Mademoiselle du Plessis, Guengrad*; she was taken ill last week; she was three times attacked by a fever, and at last grew delirious; she had occasion for a vomit, but it was not given, because it was not God's pleasure that it should, and last night, being the seventh since her illness, she died. When I heard of her death this morning, I was both surprized and afflicted; so many circumstances occurred to my memory, that I could not help weeping bitterly. It was mere accident that introduced me to her acquaintance, but our tempers exactly suited each other, and I believe few of her old friends are more concerned at her death than I.

I went in quest of the whole family, but nobody was to be seen. I was desirous of giving the holy water, and meditating upon the life and death of the deceased, but this was not agreed to; so I went to Madame de la Fayette's, where this melancholy event was much talked of. This lady had undergone many misfortunes in the latter part of her life; a decree had been given in her favour, and so hard-hearted was M. Poncet, that he refused to sign it, till certain trivial and unmeaning punctilio's were adjusted. This unjust delay,

* Isabella de Choiseul Praslin, daughter of Charles de Choiseul, Maréchal of France.

which

which grieved her the more, as it was unexpected, had such an effect upon her, that she returned home yesterday in a fever; from whence some have inferred, that M. Poncet first gave occasion to her death, and that the business was compleatly done by the physicians, who neglected to give her a vomit: but we, who look upon all events as under the immediate direction of providence, are of opinion, that her hour was come, having been fixed from all eternity, and that this concatenation of little circumstances served only to bring on the final catastrophe. Speculation, of this kind, can by no means console those, who are affected in a lively manner by her loss; but she will not be much lamented, the grief expressed for her by most people, seems to be far from sincere. The general talk concerning her is, nothing could satisfy her, misfortunes had quite sour'd her temper, and so forth. I make no doubt but you take my whole meaning. I have been a little prolix in my account of this death; but I can't help thinking that you listen to me with attention; just so I do with what you write me, every word is precious, and when you digress from your subject, you please as much as when you stick close to it.

You have made a rough campaign in Iliad; the account you have given us of it is full of humour. It is hoped that the campaign which the Mareschal de Crequi is gone upon, will prove more prosperous; the Germans are at Moulson*; two years ago they were much farther off. The army of M. de Crequi has changed its name†, as you justly observe. M. de Schomberg paid the Mareschal de Crequi a visit, telling him, that he quitted his garrison, in order to serve as a volunteer under him; that he was of no manner of use there, and that he had wrote to the King to offer him his service as one of his old soldiers. The Mareschal de Crequi answered in the politest manner imaginable, and the Mareschal de Schomberg is come back, not having found any thing to do.

Every body here is quite alert, whilst you philosophize at your castle. You call Don Robert a mere word-catcher, good God! If he was to publish all you

* A town of Champagne upon the Menise.

† It before went by the name of the army of Schomberg.

say ; no last judgment, God the author of good and evil, no such thing as sin. Do you call all this word-catching? You strictly observed the ceremonious proceeding of the country with your ladies. If they had offered to leave you, that you might write to me, you would have renounced me ; Lord, what's a mother ? How can any body write to a mother ? To deal plainly with you, daughter, you spoil me to such a degree by your friendship for me, that I know of no family friendship that appears to me warm enough. We lately had M. de Simiane, and the good d'Escars at Livri, they were very well pleased with the jaunt ; your little Arnoux was with us, he was come before them with Guintrandi, who upon this occasion, discovered his usual inconstancy. Arnoux is become a very pretty fellow, he sometimes sings at Versailles ; he hopes that M. de Rheims will engage him for his choir ; he has seven hundred livres a year at the holy chapel, he likes Paris vastly well. Can you possibly think that a young man of his abilities could confine himself to Grignan, in hopes of a benefice ? 'tis all a mere jest, he would not do it for five hundred crowns. Don't entertain any such thoughts, Mr. Count ; do as I do, when I see my people are uneasy, and want to better themselves, I have done with them ; however, I should be glad never to see any more of these gentry. I am greatly rejoiced to hear that you are in health : if you could contrive to restore my health, as well as you have done your own, I should not go to Vichi. I think your whey would be no bad remedy for me. I shall write no more, till I receive your second letter.

Wednesday morning, August 11.

My dear child, I have received your favour of the 4th of this month, it is of a pretty tolerable length. Give us constantly new reasons to love and admire your letters ; your stile resembles a river that flows gently on. All who are acquainted with it can bear no other. You are no proper judge of it yourself, you don't reap any pleasure from it, for you don't read your own letters ; we read them over and over again, and I think we are tolerable judges of epistolary writing ; I mean

Corbi-

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Corbinelli, the Baron, and myself. I can't help thinking of the last words of your letter ; there is something terrible in them. You can now suffer no farther ill, for I am no longer with you ; it was I that gave occasion to your trouble of mind, to your loss of health, and all your perplexities, I have been the cause of all your distress. What words are these, how can such ideas enter into your head ? How can one bear to read such words ? What you tell me is more afflicting than all my uneasiness, more afflicting than all that people were so cruel as to tell me when you departed. I thought they had all laid a wager which should kill me the soonest. I find 'tis always the same tune with you ; I never minded them, when I thought you were on my side, but now I see plainly that you are in the confederacy against me. I can give you no other answer now, but that which you made me a few days ago, when all the measures we have taken, in order to live a happy life, prove ineffectual ; the sooner its over the better. I entirely agree with you, the sooner 'tis over the better. I shall answer the remainder of your letter next Friday.

LETTER CCCXXXVII.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday, 13 August, 1677.

I SHALL say no more of the uneasiness you have given me by saying that you were the cause of all my inquietude and vexation : this is a strange idea that you have got in your head, and very unlike my sentiments for you. I could say a great deal upon this subject, but a thousand reasons oblige me to be silent ; but I shall often think of it, that you may depend upon.

My son went off yesterday, he is generally praised for his enterprising spirit ; some censure him for going, who would have said a thousand times worse of him if he had staid ; there is something whimsical in the opinion of the world upon these occasions ; however, he will find it easier to justify himself for going upon this random expedition, than for staying quietly at home. I must own I entirely approved of his de-

sign, so you see I can part with my children without much anxiety.

I have for some time past adopted your way of thinking, that bad company is preferable to good: how dismal it is to part with any thing good! and what a pleasure it is to get rid of a parcel of wretches! Do you remember how we were tormented at Fouesnel, and how overjoyed we were, when the good company thought proper to take their leave? I think we may then erect it into a maxim, that nothing is more desirable than bad company, and nothing more to be dreaded than good. Let whoever is puzzled with this riddle, call upon us for an explanation of it. Next Monday I shall pay a visit to our friend Guitaut; I hope he will consider me as company that should be shunned: for my part, I always thought him a man that should be carefully avoided. His wife lies in here, she is always in despair, as they have now a law suit upon their hands. The worthy Abbé is now with me; I am not very chearful as you may easily judge, but what signifies that; it is confirm'd that Charleroy is besieged; if I hear any news between this and midnight, I shall certainly let you know. M. de Lavardin, and all the gentlemen who are without commissions, are gone to join the army; this, to me, appears a great folly; however, I hope, that these mountains will at last be delivered of mice. The journey to Bagnol's is determined upon; you will soon have an opportunity of observing her languishing, her reveries, and her thoughtful disposition: she sometimes starts up as it were in surprise; and Madame de Coulanges says to her, my poor sister, you seem to be thinking of nothing at all. Her stile is altogether insupportable, I am sadly afraid that I shall catch her vulgar manner of expressing myself. She has made me renounce delicacy, refinement, and politeness, for fear of adopting cant phrases, as you say; it is a terrible thing to be quite rusticated. I hope I am worthy not to displease you, I have so ardent a desire to prove agreeable, and many such insipid compliments, which I sometimes have by heart, and forget a few moments after. We call these expressions the dogs of Basan, they are quite run mad. Farewel, my dear child,

child, don't yield to any melancholy apprehension, or else I shall be assailed with a thousand; is it not enough, that you have told me already, that you were the cause of nothing but trouble to me? What language is this! what then can do me any good, and what pleasure can I have in life without you?

L E T T E R CCCCXXVIII.

To the same.

Paris, Sunday Evening, 15 August, 1677.

I COULD never have thought, daughter, that a day so long expected, could be so exactly foreseen; however, this sixteenth, which we have been wishing for these two months, is at last arrived. I shall set out with the worthy Abbé to-morrow by day-break; we are not in very great spirits, but we have got some entertaining books, and as we shall not travel quite as fast as the stage, we shall have leisure to think of those we love by the way. Yesterday a false report was current, that the siege of Charleroy was raised: every body looks upon this as ominous, so bad an opinion has been conceived of our enemies; this thought gives me pleasure, for I don't much care to think of a battle. My son has wrote to me twice, the disorder in his foot is increased by the jolting of the chaise. You propose me a daughter-in-law, whose constitution may be capable of bearing the greatest fatigues; she has a perfect resemblance to the beauteous Dulcinea: I fancy we can expect no other match, for we are shunned by every body else; I find by the aspect of the planets, that we were not born to be happy. You appear to me to be quite fatigued with the ladies of Montelimart; why am not I with you to keep your apartment quiet, and give you a little time to respire. I see you are quite overwhelm'd by the burden; these are ill-judged connexions, such company does not at all suit you; they should leave you to your amiable family, all those who are now met together. Pray God the little *good lady* may be tempted to go there to visit the Archbishop; prithee endeavour to bring that prelate to write to her at Vichi; with regard to the affair, who knows what it may produce? For my own

part, I shall not mention the least word to her about it, as I well know what a strong opposition she would certainly make to any request of mine; one must go quite a contrary way to work with her, in order to bring her to comply with our desires; this is the only way to make any impression on her. As for you, Count, you cannot for your heart have so strong a desire to see me at Grignan, as I should have to embrace you at that place: for the love of God, do not impute to me that act of barbarity we are about to commit, it really pains me to think of it; believe there is nothing I more earnestly desire, tho' I find a prodigious obstacle in my attachment to the good Abbé, who invents so many wretched arguments against my undertaking that journey, that I am perfectly in despair of being able to make any impression upon him.

I dined to-day with the Coadjutor; he complains of the cruelty of the Abbé, who it seems left him alone at Paris, *poor soul!* without friend, acquaintance, house, or the smallest knowledge of any place where he might hide his head. I have been to visit Madame de Vins, who most assuredly entertains a very high esteem for you; she was here this morning with the Abbé Arnaud: I refused to comply with the request they made me, to leave them your picture, to have it copied at their house; but the very notion of parting with it all, pains me so exceedingly, that I cannot possibly support it at Vichi; on my return, if I find I have gathered more strength, to enable me to support the weight of such a trial, I shall give my consent to it. I beseech you to be careful of your health, if you have any regard for me; it is now so well confirmed, that were it not on your account, I should give over all thoughts of my journey to Vichi. But it is no easy matter to carry one's imagination into futurity, when one is under no sort of uneasiness; but, in short, it is your good will and pleasure it should be so, and therefore it is as good as done. Madame des Coulanges has been my conductress these two or three days last past; she gave herself a deal of trouble on my account, indeed she thought of nothing else but me.

LETTER

L E T T E R CCCCXXIX.

To the same.

Villeneuve-le-Roi, Wednesday, 18 August, 1677.

WELL, daughter, are you satisfied at last? You see I am now on the road. I set out on Monday, when the town was full of a piece of news, which was as yet a secret in the book of destiny. I was extremely anxious to know, whether we had not given battle, for as to the raising the siege of Charleroy, of which we had been, I don't know how, falsely informed, we were kept quite in the dark. I therefore begged of M. des Coulanges to send me word to Melun, where I was to lay, what he learned from Madame de Louvois in relation to that affair: in short, I saw the lacquey arrive, who informed me, that the siege of Charleroy was raised in good earnest, and that he had seen the letter which M. de Louvois had written to his lady; so that, thank heaven, I can now pursue my journey in tranquillity; 'tis certainly one of the greatest satisfactions one can possibly have, to have none of these inquietudes, which are the natural effects of war, to disturb one. What say you to the good-natured Prince of Orange? Would you not be apt to imagine, that his whole care is employed in rendering my waters of service to me, and to cause us to find matter of entertainment from our own letters, written about four years since, in which we very gravely reasoned on an event which had not then come to pass? We'll take care he shall not catch us napping a third time, I'll warrant him. I am now going to proceed on my journey, in which I follow you step by step: I had some little qualms at Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, on seeing a second time, the place where we wept so heartily together; the hostess appeared to me to be a good conversible sort of body; I questioned her very earnestly, about the state of your health the last time you were there; she told me you were somewhat disposed to melancholy, that you were very thin, and that M. de Grignan tried what he could to revive your spirits, and to prevail with you to eat a bit of something: so you see I guessed

but too true. She told me she heartily partook of my anxiety; that she too had married a daughter at a great distance from her, and that on the day of their parting, they *both swooned quite away*. I really fancied the daughter must be, at the lowest computation, as far as Lyons. I asked her, how she came to let her go so far from her? She told me, it was for the sake of an advantageous match, and with a very honest man, God be thanked. I then begged she would tell me the name of the city; she told me, it was at Paris, that he was a butcher near the palais Mazarine, and that he had the honour to serve M. du Main, Madame de Montespan, and very often his Majesty: I leave you to meditate on the justness of the comparison, as well as the simplicity of my good hostess. I partook in her affliction, as she had done in mine. Ever since I have travelled in the finest weather, and through the most delightful country, and over the best roads in the world. You told me it was winter when you travelled this way; it is now grown summer, and that the finest and most charming season you can possibly imagine. I am every where enquiring after you, and have every where the satisfaction to receive information; and had I been to have heard nothing lately, I should have had some little concern about me, for I find you are grown thin it seems; but I live in hopes the Princess Olympia will have made way for the Princess Cleopatra. The good Abbé is in a world of care about me; tho' I think the mighty complaisance, care, alacrity, and attention, he shews in what he relates to me, are properly to be charged to your account, since his extreme attention in conducting me safely, is, as he tells me, from his great desire to oblige you: I told him, I would take care you should be well informed of his marvellous assiduity. We are now reading an history of the Emperors of the east, written by a young Princess, daughter to the Emperor Alexis. It is extremely entertaining, but be it known to you, without any prejudice to Lucian, with whom I still continue, I had never, till now, seen any of his pieces, except four or five celebrated ones, the rest are in every respect equal to these; but what I prefer even to Lucian, is your letters; I assure you, my regard for them, is in no respect

spect owing to my affection ; you may ask all your acquaintances : tell me, you Count de Grignan, M. de la Garde, and you, Mr. Abbé, is it not true, that nobody writes as she does ? I accordingly divert myself with two or three that I have brought along with me : what you say of a certain lady is really worthy to be remarked. However, I won't flinch an inch ; I have seen the *diligence* go by, and am more fully persuaded than ever, that it is impossible to grow weary in such a carriage. A propos, la B—— has distinguished herself, by her cruel and barbarous behaviour on the death of her mother * : she ought certainly to have lamented her, were it only out of regard to her interest ; she was equally generous and and unnatural ; she has scandalized every body ; she did nothing but chat and wash her teeth, whilst the poor woman was giving up the ghost. I think I hear you cry out penitence. Ah, daughter, how extremely opposite is your behaviour to this ! I have had very serious thoughts on occasion of this decease : Madame de G—— had figured very high in life, had made the fortunes of many, and had been a cause of joy and pleasure in many others ; she had a hand in great affairs ; she enjoyed the confidence of two ministers (M. de Chavigny, M. Fouquet) to whose good taste she did a real honour. She possessed a great elevation of mind, had great views with the art of possessing and using a splendid fortune in a very noble and magnificent manner, the loss of which, she was unable to support ; the disorder of her affairs had sour'd her temper, and she was irritated by her misfortune ; this had a prodigious influence on every thing that related to her, and might possibly serve as a pretext to the coldness of her friends. In this respect her behaviour was entirely opposite to that of M. Fouquet, who, though intoxicated with his exaltation, did yet most heroically support his disgrace : this comparison I have always thought extremely striking. Here are the reflexions of Villeneuve le Roi for you : you may easily guess, there would have been no leisure for such meditations, had not one the advantage of sitting entirely at one's ease in one's coach. I add

* Madame de Guénégaud. See letter of the 10th of August.

to these, by way of conclusion, or epilogue, that I think the world too easily puts up with the loss of such a person as she was, and whose good, certainly very far exceeded her ill qualities.

Joigny, Wednesday evening.

We have had the finest ride imaginable since dinner. Well, 'tis really a most beautiful country, and a most delightful little estate this! tho' it has been let for no more than twenty thousand crowns since the late bad times; it was formerly rented at a much higher sum. How do you do? do you not begin to grow plump? do you not still sleep as much as ever? So Count, not a word from you about my daughter; perhaps your pen refuses to set down any thing on this head? Let me hear how your music goes on; as for that wife of yours, she begins methinks to play the learned and delicate lady, and I am sometimes inclined to think she is no great admirer of your harmony. My advice to you, is never to trouble your head any more about Arnoux. His views are by no means pointed towards your convenience at Grignan. He is young, gets a great deal of money, and will get still more; he even aspires to be admitted into the King's chapel. Do as I do, dear Count, when I find people begin to be indifferent about me, which is, to put on a resolution from that moment, to be equally indifferent about them, which produces the happiest consequences imaginable. I supped the other evening with the Marchioness d'Huxelles, where I found Rouville, who spoke to me in relation to you, in so serious a manner, and with so much esteem and respect, that I really think he cannot live long. I have a world of compliments besides, as from your Saint Geran's, your de Vins's, &c. in short, enough to make up the number, to which you want, as they say, to augment them, on account of the discovery you happened to make the other day at Aix. I return to you, my daughter; I grow uneasy on account of my not hearing from you, and if I have no letter to-morrow, I shall actually be much vexed. I hope you will have the grace to let me know whether I have guessed right, in regard to that false heart you are unwilling to reckon upon.

I have

Auxerre, Thursday at noon.

I have just arrived, after a tolerable hot journey. We have seen the castle of Seignelai, as we passed that way, and have given it our blessing, so that we are in hopes it will certainly thrive. But we had the misfortune not to lodge in the same place where you lodged. We were ill enough accommodated, having contented ourselves with following the old beaten track. I have sent to the post-office, to know whether there is any letter for me; the post-master it seems was out of the way, so that I wait his return. His wife told them she had lodged the Countess de Grignan as she passed that way, and that she looked rather thin; that this was on the Friday, and that they had for all that, set on the pot over the fire; that the Count eat nothing but a few strawberries: so that I am quite vexed to have put up here, where there is nothing good; and the more so, as we are to pass the rest of the day here, in order to rest our horses. To-morrow we may reach Epoisses, where M. de Guitaut expects us with a hearty welcome. I am sorry I shall not have the pleasure of meeting his lady there, who is a woman of extreme good sense, and is none of those whose company gives one the least restraint. She remains behind, on account of a law suit, which has so hastened her reckoning, that she has sent as far as this place for her midwife, who is to deliver her in the heart of Paris: it is impossible to pay a greater compliment to the power of custom and habit. I am wholly yours, my dearest, and I shall never be prevailed upon to think, it can possibly be for my advantage to be absent from you; I hardly think they will be able to persuade you into this ridiculous notion; but now I think on it, you have written me on this head such things as I shall never forget. We shall be very much to be pitied you and I, when your affairs shall oblige you to come and see me once more.

L E T T E R CCCCXXX.

To the Same.

Epoisses, Saturday, 21 August, 1677.

WE arrived here yesterday evening at eight; we thought of being an hundred times overturned in

in the channels worn by the rivulets, which we might have easily shunned, had we had the use of a farthing candle; but what a charming thing it is to see neither the heavens nor the earth, or rather darkness visible. In short, we sent nither for assistance, just as the master of the castle * was going to bed. You know there was no halting by the way; and what will surprise you still more, is, that I was not in the smallest degree apprehensive; it was the wise head of the Abbé that set us on undertaking to travel fourteen leagues between Auxerre and this place, which is by no means a common stage. I got up at three in the morning, so that I slept most delightfully in this fine house, where we regretted so much the absence of the lady. You know the master, and the kind obliging way he uses towards those to whom he has any regard; he assures me I am amongst the number of these favourites, which I the rather believe, on account of his friendship for you; he is so pleased with my having brought you into the world, that he is perfectly at a loss how to entertain me, and can find nothing good enough for me. Our conversation has no end, he loves prating, and when once I begin, I am no bad hand at it myself; so that we make the best company in the universe. Should you perceive your ears to tingle, be assured it is not all owing to vapours, but to our talking for ever about you. I flattered myself, I should receive a letter from you here; I had been already deceived at Auxerre; eight or ten days without hearing one syllable from you, seems to me a great while, and I promise you, I am grown something melancholy upon it. I depend upon receiving a letter from you, before I close this letter; it is a thing absolutely essential to my heart to love you ever, and to be perpetually thinking of you. We begin already to grumble at our eight thousand livres by way of reparation of our damages, as well as on account of their disposing of my corn three days before raising the price. This trifling precipitation costs me upwards of two thousand livres, though I don't mind it much. This is the triumph of the divine providence, and when I am conscious to myself of no fault, I am presently per-

* The Count de Guitaut.

fectly easy about the matter. I sent you a large packet from Auxerre, which I had written at two or three different places. I found no news here, but those I heard at Melun, that is to say, the raising of the siege of Charleroy. Our good natured enemies have no inclination to disturb my tranquillity, on which account, I love them from my soul.

L E T T E R CCCXXXI.

To the same.

Epoisses, Wednesday morning, 25 August, 1677.

I HAVE here, my dearest, received your's of the 11th, which I expected with much impatience; I am not used to such delays; it renders my whole journey uneasy to be disappointed. M. Guitaut does what he can to persuade me, how extreme glad he is to see me here: all our people are at Boubilli, where the farmer treated us with a most plentiful dinner; M. de Guitaut, M. de Trichateau, all this seemed something very considerable in this frightful house. I shall continue here till Sunday, and will write to you once more from this place. One enjoys great liberty at this house, so that I can read, work, or walk out when I please; the master of the house and I have a deal of discourse together; and there is hardly a country you can name, where we have not been travellers. He tells me a thousand stories about Provence, as well as about you, the Intendant, and Vardes, I knew nothing of till now. He seems a very devout person; he makes use of excellent guides for the conduct of his life; has great desire to pay his debts, without contracting any new: this is the first step to be made in this road, when once one becomes acquainted with true religion. Notwithstanding, he is still excellent good company; but this will soon be over, for charity towards mankind, begins already to cut short his discourse by one half. He loves and esteems you beyond any thing human, and I am persuaded it is not he who has deserted, so you will not tell me yet who it is that has; do you think I would blab it, were you seriously to request me not to do it? Well, well, my dear, I shall say no more about it. You
tell

tell me a dreadful piece of news of that Galley; alas, poor Saint-Même, methinks I actually see him. But whence comes it, that you are not equally surpris'd at my news of the Prince of Orange? He besieges Charleroy, discovers an army, and is so astonish'd at the sight, that he breaks up that instant, and so sets out for Maestricht. His surprise was as great, as if he had never heard there was a French army in Flanders: we are inform'd, we owe him great obligations on this account, for it seems he was so well posted, that we were greatly at a loss for ground on which to encamp: this is the second time he has extricated us from the like embarrassment*: you know I had foreseen all this. All our volunteers are return'd: think you this piece of news did not deserve the price of an article in the Dutch Gazette, could they have ventured to tell us the truth of the matter? I have no news from my son, so I fancy he has not return'd: he has, no doubt, continued his journey, and has done well in so doing: it was not in the nature of things he could have staid at Paris: in order to assert this, he must have assumed the figure and behaviour of a wounded person. I think I told you he was as like some little man in perfect health, as one drop of water is like another. The public has no mercy on the reputation of warriors.

L E T T E R CCCXXXII.

To the same.

Epoisses, Thursday, 26 August, 1677.

I HAVE just now received another of your letters, my dearest, pretty creature; and possibly may receive another before I set out, which will be on Sunday, so that I am only packing up to-day, till such time as the courier departs. I shall have made a stay here of a matter of ten days only, which you will say is a reasonable visit. I think I am pretty quick-sighted, as to point of sincerity, and would make no scruple to promise for that of the master of this house: be that as it will, he is into his own snare, if what he tells

* The first siege of Charleroy was raised in 1672.

me of the friendship he has for me, and his gladness to see me here, be not sincere. I am sensible I in no wise incommode him; the liberty I enjoy here, assures me all I have been saying is true. We make a great many chapters in our discourse together, but the end of all is to talk of you; this is so pleasant after all, that one alights without the least pain. I am in perfect health; do not tell me you have not a despotic authority over me, or that the damps of the evening are the least obstacle to the gratification of your desires; it is true, that time of day is my ancient friend, and that I cannot, without pain, think of breaking with it entirely. But as to the journey to Vichi, for instance, it is chiefly on your account; and should your amity for me fail to give you such a foresight into futurity, as to discover what my present good health hinders me from foreseeing, I declare positively against going there at all: so that you are to conclude from hence, that my design in undertaking this journey so chearfully as I do, is wholly with a view to inform your belief, of my zeal for whatever may contribute to give you pleasure, on all manner of occasions. You gave me a very excellent account of your thunderbolt. I remember I have formerly heard some very surprising effects of thunder, tho' I was very far from giving the credit to such marvellous passages I now do, from what you tell me. The little girl struck dead, without seeming at all affected with any mortal symptoms, as it had been by means of sympathetic powder, is really very astonishing. I can very well believe you must have had curiosity enough to go to see her; for my own part, I could have wished, with all my heart, to have been of the party. I am mighty fond of the marvellous, as this accident certainly is; for it must be owned, it is a very uncommon kind of death. You have excellent thunder at Grignan, the peals are louder and more majestic, and your lightnings have a brightness, and flash superior to those any where else. Lucian could never have called this clap of thunder, a . . . it was most assuredly the thundering Jupiter, appearing in all the majesty with which
he

he dazzled his mistress Semele *: we never saw any thing near so considerable in this country. I dare say you will be pleased with Don Quixote: I am fond of the antiquated stile on many occasions, and had this ancient diction been entirely taken away from five or six books that I could mention, they must certainly have lost their beauty, and I am sure, I should never afterwards take the trouble to read them: but yet I cannot take it upon me to say, my regard for the Spanish original, or if you will for Don Quixote, was so exceeding great, as that I did not receive great pleasure from the perusal of the translation. Should this kind of reading happen to afford you any degree of pleasure, let me advise you to continue it, without prejudice however to the *wrath of Achilles* †, in which you are at present engaged. I am entirely of your opinion, in giving the *preference* to fables over the *epic poem*, as the moral offers itself to the mind not only in a quicker, but also a more pleasing manner. We are not under the necessity of finding out whether it be noon at fourteen of the clock; but let this be said, with the leave of the great Tasso, whom I can never suffer myself to forget without the greatest ingratitude. Corbinelli acquaints me, he thinks M. de Vardes will come to Bourbon, where he is to bring him his daughter, with which beauty and him, I am to return to Paris: this vision is, you'll say, comical enough. Should Vardes go by way of Grignan, as he informs me he intends, pray put it in his head to come to Vichi; there are no waters in the universe preferable to those of this place, the waters of the Seine only excepted. But to make choice of the Bourbon spaw merely because they are a trifle nearer, is a very silly conceit to be sure. How happy are you in your new guests! and how good-natured they, each in their own way! with what an entire perfection do I embrace them, and what an infinite pleasure you will do me in telling them so much! Profit of this happy occasion,

* The story of Semele is well known, as well as the manner in which she lost her life.

† The Countess de Grignan was then employed in reading Homer's Iliads.

daughter,

daughter, they are so many sources of good which are wholly inexhaustible. Madame des Coulanges has written me a letter full of amity and news, that is to say, the most adorable supineness of the Prince of Orange, the marriage of Madame de Schomberg's niece, and the comical description she makes of the sorry blunders of this wedding, in which the bride had like to have died. She tells me the journey to Fontainebleau is as good as determined; she says Madame de la Fayette is on the mending hand; and all this soufed and seasoned with a world of pretty compliments and kind things, so that her letters are the most acceptable presents one can possibly receive. Notwithstanding there is no one to peep over my shoulder, I shall say not a word about the secrets in a certain country, you know which I mean, they being so many trifles one cannot lay any stress upon, and which have not strength enough to bear being transported: here is one, however, which cannot fail of proving agreeable to my Lord Archbishop. The handsome Abbé perfectly well remembers the letter which certain Bishops wrote to his Holiness, in relation to certain relaxations. He will tell you it was an heinous crime, or rather a monster stifled in its birth by the agents, who may be said to be in some sort omnipresent. I cannot pretend to say what waggish, or, if you will, sage spirit, gave his Holiness this piece of information. He has written to his majesty, "that he was the rather surpris'd at the suppression of this letter, as Kings are not wont to hinder this kind of commerce between the children and their common father; that he could never have believed this notion should come from a Prince, whose piety is well known, but is persuaded that the persons who gave him this council, certainly did not apprehend the consequences of it." He gave this brief in charge to the three Cardinals de Bouillon, d'Estrees, and de Bonzi. If this piece of news is really as they tell it us, it is certainly mighty curious. Do not you admire how every thing is a crime in our poor brothers? When they neglected consulting the Pope, they were then scismaticks; when they laid before him their complaints of *probable opinion*, with other such commodities,

modities, they were guilty of rebellion. Let us then say, dear daughter, that they are either beloved, or hated of God in an extraordinary degree, since they are persecuted in the manner we behold them. I am certain this little piece of history will divert our prelates. I am sorry for M. de la Garde's vapours. So then you are both equally dissatisfied with the air of Paris! God must, no doubt, have given that of Grignan a new benediction, for it was never, since I can remember, once suspected fit to restore, to refresh, and moisten a young person. God be for ever praised for the health you have enjoyed there; without reasoning or drawing any kind of reference from the matter, I will content myself with saying, and I think I may safely assert, that this air has been as serviceable to me, as to yourself, since it has recovered you from that deplorable state, in which I left you at our last parting.

Saturday, 28 August.

I have just now the pleasure of your letter of the 18th. I have received three of them at this place. I set out to-morrow. Madame de Chastelus is come to visit me, instead of waiting for mine at Chastelus. I shall pass one day among my relations, and the fourth at Vichi. You had just cause to be surprized at the death of poor Madame des Plessis *. I was extremely moved at it, as well as many others: she loved us, you was her idol, and nothing could possibly surpass the mutual harmony in which you lived together; she was carried off on the sixth day, and was quite insensible, which is really most deplorable. As for our Cardinal, I have often thought as you do; but whether it be owing to this that the enemy are no longer in a condition to give us any cause of apprehension, or that the friends are not apt to take the alarm, it is certain affairs are not at all disconcerted. You do extremely well in writing to d'Hacqueville in regard to this business, and even in letting it be known to the Cardinal. Is he a baby? Cannot he come to St. Dennis, without asking leave of his governors? and should they prove remiss in his affairs, is he therefore to lay still, and let himself be wor-

* Gunegaud.

ried?

ried? You are anxious, and with abundance of justice as well as decorum, for the preservation of so considerable a personage, and one to whom you owe so much friendship. All you say in relation to Charleroy, is as true as pure gold; mothers, sisters, female friends, and mistresses, are all infinitely obliged to his highness of Orange: nothing can be more diverting than the conduct of all these gentlemen during the whole campaign. In short, the court is at Fontainebleau. 'Tis said, Madame des Coulanges will go to pass the time this jaunt lasts at Livri? pray have you sent her an answer yet? M. de Guitaut is desirous to let you know how much he is pleased with the place of my abode, and with what tenderness we both mentioned you; but I cannot say where he is at present, and will close this letter, after embracing you a thousand times, with the most perfect affection.

L E T T E R CCCCXXXIII.

To the Same.

Saulieu, Sunday Evening, 29 August, 1677.

I WROTE to you yesterday in the evening, and now write to you to-day. At length I have quitted Epouisses, but have not as yet parted with the master of this fine castle. He is come to conduct me to this place; I find one is extremely apt to esteem him, but you know him well enough: he has given me as handsome a reception as if I had been Madame de Grignan herself: I think I cannot well say any thing stronger than this, which is indeed saying all in one word. Is it not true, Count? pray answer me.

Monseigneur de Guitaut continues.

In short, we part to-morrow, so that I shall then have no other employment but merely to think of you, as soon as I shall have quitted Madame de Sévigné; for whilst we were together, we did nothing but speak of you perpetually, so that I am sure your ears must have tingled: you are the proper person to say which ear it was, or if both, for actually we have mentioned you, in every way possible to speak of a person. I could not help resolving to accompany her, till the end of her first day's

day's journey, after leaving this place. Methinks we take our leave of each other with regret. But we shall soon see each other again; and if you do not come along, we shall then go a visiting amongst the neighbours, and will receive company in our turn. I would not for all that, have you to admit any thought likely to render you uneasy; seek after every thing that may continue to give you pleasure, and do not run away with a conceit, that there is nothing in nature that has a right to make any such pretension: the world is a very pretty kind of thing, and you know, they who seek, find. Here's an expression you may possibly not relish: but I pretend to know what I mean, and I assure you, I am far from speaking with so much impropriety as you may imagine.

Madame de Sévigné.

You see what a sage gentleman it is, and yet I told him a little while ago, on seeing him alert as a grasshopper, "my poor Count, it is still very early to go to bed; you are very green yet, honest friend. There is a strong dash of the old man, that is to say, of the young man in you." But I must tell you the whole affair. The other day he made only a very light collation, for he wanted to do penance, it seems, and, in good troth, he has very much need of it: by a slip of the tongue, I chanced to call him M. de Grignan, a name always you know, at my tongue's end. He cried out, with a prodigious air of sincerity; *O, would to God I were he!* I looked at him, and told him, *I had as leave see the cloath laid for supper.* We understood one another, and laughed most heartily; say I right? pray answer me.

Monf. de Guitaut resumes the pen.

It is certainly true, Madam, people carry their wishes very far, and, let me tell you, it is no easy matter to master them. You know my penance at least, tho' you do not my transgressions. But as I find myself equally irresolute with respect to either, I leave you at full liberty to form of both what conjecture you please. I conclude therefore with assuring you by the by, that your mamma is at present, pray don't mention a word of it for the world, a little fuddled; but, let me tell you not with
the

the waters of Vichi: I am in doubt, whether if the fit continues, she will go there at all, it would be so much money thrown away.

Madame de Sévigné, then proceeds.

It is the gentleman himself who is fuddled; as for myself, I will not deny I am a little inclined that way. One sits so long at table here, that one drinks and drinks out of pure complaisance, and to keep others in countenance, and so grows somewhat chearful, and this is the whole affair, so help me. A propos, we met Monsieur and Madame de Valevoire, with an equipage like so many Bohemians. We attacked the first litter, in which we found honest Valavoire; heavens, what an old creature he is! We all of us alighted; he kissed me, and I really fancied I was going to be worried; for you know there is something of the great and terrible in his mein. His wife spoke to me about you and your state of health, so as to persuade me what she said was true; you are not very fat, and have a very good complexion, as fair as a lilly, and perfectly easy in your mind: every word she said seemed extremely natural, so that I was greatly pleased with it. Methinks the roads are the oddest I ever saw; I thought how you must likewise have traversed these wild scenes. My coachman is a most dexterous fellow, tho' rather too bold and venturesome: M. de Guitaut says, he values him for two things; first, because he is an excellent coachman, and in the second place, because he shews, a just disregard of my shrieks. Adieu, daughter, methinks here's enough for two persons in the heat of their cups. Here is a very approved doctor, who says to me, Madame, pray why do you go to Vichi? Do you answer him, for as to myself, I never knew what to say to the question.

LETTER CCCXXXIV.

To the Same.

La Palisse, Friday Evening, 3 September, 1677.

SO my dearest, you see I am almost got as far as Vichi, that is to say, I dine there to-morrow, the fourth of this present month, as I promised you I should.

I wrote

I wrote to you by M. Guitaut from Saulieu, a nonsensical letter enough; I wrote you four from Epoisses, at which place I received all those which were returned me from Paris. I was seized and detained in Burgundy in such a manner, that had I not chanced to think of you, and that you had required my drinking the waters, I really think I should entirely have forgot myself there. I was to visit Buffi in a castle, which is not the castle of Buffi, but enjoys the finest air in the world, and the situation of which is the most delightful. Coligny * was there, a very amiable person, as you well enough know: I have a world of things to say to you, but I reserve these trifles for another occasion. I was obliged to dine with M. d'Autun, *the poor soul!* and afterwards with de Boulongeon; and the day I ought to have set out, I was constrained to stay to talk of our affairs with the President Berbisi, who came there to see me. In short, I am now on the road to your Lyons, and but twenty leagues from that place. On Tuesday, God willing, I shall be at Grignan; my God! I must banish that thought, my dear child; it will become as frightful as a dragon, were I not to take prodigious care to keep it under. But let us say something of d'Autun's journey hither, which was through a most frightful road truly. I took my leave at every place I passed. I am here in the good Saint Geran's castle, who has received me with as much kindness, as if I had been his own daughter. You passed this way, daughter, on which account I told every thing dear to me within twenty leagues round. When I am without hearing from you, I am really to be pitied; it makes me so low-spirited, that I really think it hurts me. Since I left Epoisses, it is now seven days, which is somewhat long; however, I am in hopes I shall hear from you soon, which is my only consolation. I beseech you to tell M. de Grignan, that I conjure him to write to M. de Seignelai, or to M. de Bonrepos, in order to obtain leave of absence for the Chevalier de Sévigné for this winter, that he may come hither to sollicit a ship. There are a number of vacant places; the poor lad has

* Daughter of the Count de Buffi, and the same who married M. de la Riviere, in June, 1681.

written to me four several times, he does not know what to make of himself; he is at Messina, and I really pity him; it is his only method of subsisting, or rather his daily bread depends on it: I beg you to join with me in providing for him, you know his name; if this won't move you to compassion, remember he is my grandson. I am pressed to send away this letter, as the post-boy will pass in two minutes. Adieu, therefore, dear lovely creature. It is now eight days since I am wholly ignorant of what relates to you, but even ignorant as I am, I still know that I love you with the most tender affection.

L E T T E R CCCCXXXV.

To the Same.

Vichi, Saturday Evening, 4 September, 1677.

I HAVE received two of your letters, my dearest, on my arrival, for want of which I was really extremely low-spirited, but am now recovered and perfectly well: I shall give them a second perusal, which is to me an extreme consolation. I promise you I shall never write you above a word or two, after this day. But pray do you follow the same method in writing to me. You are quite excessive in the length of your letters, and to be so lean as you are at your age, is to be really ailing: I hate, it is true, to see Adam's rib so visible in your person. Daughter, do not be angry with me this evening, I want to chat a little, I am this moment arrived, and nothing shall make me hold my peace. M. de Champlatreux is already come to see me; the good Abbé is greatly taken with his conversation, and will often invite him to dinner. Know you who has sent to compliment me already? Who but the Marquis de Termes, who arrived yesterday, very ill of the gout and cholic. They say his beard is as long as that of a capuchin; faith, it was extremely well of him. The Chevalier de Flamarens is with him, so are M. and Madame d'Albon, and M. de Jusfac: here are expected a world of company besides. But I had almost forgot the best of all, which is Vincent, who is already on the point of leaving this place, and will take extreme

extreme good care of me. I am in extreme good health, and I do not know what I can do better, than nail fast this happy season. I wrote you yesterday from le Palice, where I saw a little boy, I thought a great beauty indeed; he is just seven years old, and I am sure our's must be just such another: his father, who is gentleman to M. de Saint Geran, has taught him the exercise of the half pike and musket; it is the prettiest diversion imaginable to see him perform: you would certainly love this little child. This pastime serves to supple his body, he is besides cool, dextrous, and very resolute. His father spends all his time with the army, and is now at Palice, on account of his ill state of health, where he diverts himself with making his son a compleat little soldier: I should prefer this to a dancing-master ——— Should fortune throw such a person in your way, indulge yourself in the same amusement, and I will pass my word for the consequence. The Archbishop has wrote the good Abbé all the tender, obliging, good-natured things imaginable, to induce him to undertake the journey to Grignan; but I do not see that this shakes his resolution, tho' I think it makes some little impression on him. I should have a deal to say in regard to your two letters lately received. But tho' I have not yet been initiated at the fountain, I will, however, set you an example. A certain courtier, said the other day to Madame de Ludre, "Upon my soul, "Madame, you are handsomer than ever." "Softly, "said she, I am glad on't, as I am one degree less ridiculous than formerly." I thought the repartee pleasant enough. Madame des Coulanges takes inconceivable care of me, in which she pays me that attention, which she herself receives from so many others. La Bagnol's likewise writes me a thousand affected things. Adieu, my dear child, take care I beseech you how you return in the depth of winter, as also coming by the round about way of Rheims. Believe there is no constitution fit to undergo such terrible fatigue; such journeys as these wear out the body, just as they do our carriages.

L E T.

LETTER CCCXXXVI.

To the Same.

Vichi, Monday, 6 September, 1677.

DO not be in the least uneasy, daughter; I write to you at six in the evening, at a distance from the water, and free from any sort of vapour. I do it, that I may indulge myself in the pleasure of talking with you for a little while, as I have broke off every other correspondence. Do not you think we are both at too great a distance, as well as too near each other? This distance is of real detriment to both. I pass the day with M. de Termes and Flamarens; I am their sole comforter; I do not know what is the matter with them, but they are certainly both very far from well. They brought one of the musicians belonging to the opera with them; he plays better than Baptiste, and diverts us extremely. There is besides a little impertinent hunch-backed creature, who is singing perpetually, and who imagines himself a most admirable performer, and is a perpetual fund of laughter to us. M. de Champlatreux is our grand Druid, and keeps the best house in the universe. My God, whence comes it, that I could not have the pleasure to be under your tuition at this place! M. and Madame d'Albon, a sister of Mademoiselle de l'Estrange, Madame de Sourdis, with five hundred besides of all ranks and denominations: never was there seen such a multitude of company, or such a series of fine weather; the month of September has neither the extremes of winter or of summer, and is the finest September you ever saw. Madame said the other day, to Madame de Ludre, whilst she was playing with a pair of compasses, "I must certainly dig out these two eyes of yours, that do such a world of mischief." "Out with them, says the other, with all my soul and spirit, for, believe me, they have not done near the mischief I intended." It would be really pleasant enough, were I to convey to you all the bons mots that have been said by that beauty*. How do you do, dearest, and what is become of that pain in your leg

* See page 240.

you complained of? Is it possible to imagine this could really be of any service to you? So then it must have been some humour that had like to have fallen upon your lungs, and not a mere heat of blood, as was imagined. And pray is the poor little girl recovered? If you love me, my pretty one, if you really love me, see you endeavour to grow plumper. Ah, how thin you grow! since even M. de Grignan complains of it.

Tuesday Evening.

I have received your letter of the first of September. What would you, daughter? What kind of exchange or barter would you have me make? Ah! keep what you have, and bethink yourself who you are, when you are not exposed to be devoured by all the dragons in the world. You have some at Paris, which are both very black and very cruel; but when you please, what a fund of pleasure and delight do not we find in your good humour? I often sigh whilst I mention your name, and even when I only think of you. I decline answering your letter, merely because I would not be troublesome to you: for you bereave me of the joy of my life, in robbing me of the pleasure of discoursing with you; but you must not be contradicted: you pass very lightly over a number of topics; and I, on the other hand, make no answer. I only conjure you, to acquaint d'Hacqueville with your resolution for the winter, that we may know whether we are to take the hotel de Carnavalet, or no. I likewise intreat you to take care of your health; mine is most admirably good; the waters agree with me perfectly well. Vincent is one of my governors, as well as Champlatreux: every thing is settled by the strictest order and regularity: we all dine at noon, sup at seven, go to bed at ten, and are up to drink the waters at six next morning.

I could wish you saw to what an excess the presence of de Termes and Champlatreux has carried the head-dress, and other ornaments, of two or three belles of this country. In short, from six in the morning, every creature is abroad, with head-dresses hurlupée, powdered, curled, caps *a la bascule*, paint, patches, little pendent caps, fans, long and strait stays; in a word, enough to make one burst with laughing. Yet, for all that,

that, one must drink the waters, so that the waters return both at mouth, and by perspiration very plentifully.

LETTER CCCXXXVII.

To the Same.

Vichi, Monday, 13 September, 1677.

WHAT! my dearest and most lovely girl! So then you have been ill, have been bled twice, and have had good reason to be afraid of your squinzy, since you have been spitting blood! They say it proceeded only from the throat; but pray is this the blood that was perfectly cooled and refreshed? Had this ferocity, which has fallen into your legs, what a condition had we been in, had it fallen upon your lungs? All this I was wholly ignorant of, living in perfect security, and relying upon your word; your letters are grow neither shorter, or less natural; I had not the smallest suspicion of any thing, though you was in this condition when I arrived from Epoisses. If one were to make it a scruple of conscience, never to laugh but with reason, the surest way would certainly be, never to laugh at all, but to foster a perpetual uneasiness: but we easily lay open our hearts to joy, and to a certain confidence which makes us hope, that those we love are well, when they tell us they are; and we are loth to share the pangs of absence, with additional inquietudes. It was not Vardes that told me of your illness it was a gentleman from Provence, who told it to a sister of Mademoiselle de l'Estrange, who further added, you was perfectly recovered. Vardes arrived the same day, and assured me, you was entirely recovered, except in the article of your thinness, which, he said, was most excessive. If you do not follow the advice of Guisoni, with regard to cooling your blood, you will grow so excessive lean and tender, that your life will hardly be worth enjoying. Vardes has wholly removed my uneasiness, by telling me, in the most persuasive manner, that your complexion is perfectly clear and white, and without the smallest apprehension of

changing. He has a notion, he is pretty well with you; he is perfectly transported at the thoughts of it, and I beseech you to have compassion on his misfortune. He has met with a most divine reception here, and was strongly tempted to remain here, being persuaded that the waters and company at this place, are more proper for his case than those of Bourbon: but M. de Champlatreux, by a ridiculous piece of policy, has obliged him to continue his journey, whether he would or no. We think it is out of jealousy; for never was there such a *dog of a gardener*: his court-yard was full of thorns and briars, and we laughed most heartily at it: poor Chefieres told me of it an hundred times; as I have not yet been able to comprehend the affair of his death, I am always tempted to tell him he is in the right.

Vardes pleased de Termes excessively, as well as de Termes did Vardes; their souls were, it seems, doubly struck with a reciprocal pleasure: this secret they discovered of pleasing each other, render both more amiable. I could have been very glad Vardes had staid here; Corbinelli would certainly have come too. You may guess what an extreme consolation it would be for me to have you here; I think I see your sentiments on this head; but is it not evident that providence has not decreed it, from its pains to disconcert so many projects formed for that purpose? Heaven must therefore intend you should come this winter; I have no inclination to spread such a report, but you should acquaint d'Hacqueville that he should take the hotel de Carnavalet. I should think it a prodigious conveniency for both, as well as a great deal of trouble saved, in looking out. There are certain hours, morning and evening, for persons who live together, that are impossible to be atoned for in the hurly burly of visits. In short, I take it for granted, you think as I do on this affair, and that as this house in a manner offers itself to our choice, we cannot possibly do better than to take it for this winter. Adieu, dear daughter. We live here amongst exceeding good company. The weather is admirable, the country most delightful, where one makes the highest and best chear in the world. There are

two or three Jesuits, who are perfect connoisseurs; what a pleasure it would give me to see them demolished by Corbinelli! Maimbourg* is an impertinent fellow, and all his works smell of the lamp: what a fine fancy to punish a Turk, because he refused to salute the image of the virgin.

L E T T E R CCCCXXXVIII.

To the Same.

Vichi, Thursday, at four in the Afternoon, 16 September, 1677.

ASK the Chevalier de Grignan whether I took not a great deal of care of him, whether I did not procure him a good physician, and whether I am not an excellent one myself? I should never have thoughts of seeing, at Vichi, such woeful countenances: as we are always in society, whatever is best is sure to get together, so that there is always exceeding good company. I treat the Chevalier's health in a very serious manner; I see how his medicines begin to operate on him, and see him always in a good way before I quit him. I begin the pump to-day, and fancy it will not prove so very severe as last year, as I have before and after me Jussac. Termes, Flamarens, each his half hour. We are, you see, a set of wretched companions but not to an extreme degree. I shall let you know what news we have; they have already begun, and think it the prettiest diversion imaginable. My God, daughter! in what a dangerous and painful condition you have been? It was precisely the 15th of August, on a Sunday, you was not able to write to me, and the hurry and confusion of my departure, prevented the inquietude which this would have occasioned me at any other time. That inflammation of your throat, causes me great apprehensions, and the fever to boot. Alas, my dear child, when one's blood boils in such a

* A celebrated Jesuit, author of several histories, which were at first in great vogue, but were afterwards as much cried down. He quitted the Jesuits college by an order of the Pope in 1682, for writing against the court of Rome, in favour of the clergy of France.

nanner, all is soon over with one. You had a fever, and you was let blood twice in one day, and besides you had one thigh and both leggs swelled; what a malignity of humours must occasion this! and in what a dreadful condition must we have been, to have had this humour fallen upon your lungs! Thanks to God, you have got the better of this disorder, that is certain, and I have no sort of uneasiness about the matter: but yet I wonder how you could contrive, in order to deceive me to write such long letters. Is there no person in the world then, who has authority enough over you, to bring you to observe any kind of regimen or care of your health? Will you never think of moderating that prodigious heat of your blood? I see never a person that neglects the necessary care of life and health except yourself; every thing one sees here is a proof of it. You are the only person I can discover, who seems desirous to finish the part you have to play in life, with all possible expedition: notwithstanding, did you love me, you would have more compassion on me. When I reflect that every thing I do is wholly to please you, and as I am now going to attack, with the utmost courage and resolution, a most entire and perfect state of health, solely that I may quiet your fears on my account, without being able to prevail with you, to follow the advice of Grisoni, I am lost in the thought. I never, in my life, saw so beautiful a creature, take pleasure in destroying herself. All mankind are satisfied, that people recover of all manner of disorders by the use of remedies, whilst you affect to make use of no sort of medicine whatever. They are, notwithstanding, extremely necessary, as I found myself much the better for them at the rocks. In a word, I think you are very properly called a prodigy. This is what I was willing you should know, as I intended, by this means, to solace myself, and unburden my mind, but shall say not a word more about it, for do not think I intend to rip up old sores, God forbid I should; yet could I not, the temptation of causing you; remark how much my complaisance surpasses yours. I fancy d'Hacqueville has taken the hotel de Carnavalet for us: we shall be perfectly well lodged in that house; we ought to content

tent ourselves as well as we possibly can, as nothing has a better look, or can be better œconomy than to live together. I hope this journey, which is a consequence of the joint politics of the whole family, will prove as fortunate, as the other has proved sad and disagreeable by your ill state of health. This Valavoire says not one word to me about your having been ill, you must have tutored him to admiration; and I, in the mean time, was writing you a parcel of silly nonsense from Saulieu. In short, daughter, let us say no more about it; you are possibly by this time become more complying and docile, after having seen the impetuosity of that blood of yours; and I, on my side, drink the most salutary waters, in the finest weather, the most delightful country, and in the most agreeable company that can possibly be imagined or wished for. Good God, how admirable must these waters be to M. de Grignan! The little good lady takes them to purge so many good dinners as she takes, and is taking precautions against all manner of disorders for ten years to come. Adieu, my angel, write to Madame des Coulanges, I intreat you.

L E T T E R CCCXXXIX.

To the Same.

Vichi, Sunday, 19 September, 1677.

I FANCY, my dearest daughter, I wrote you a strange sort of an epistle last time. I was really uneasy, wrote with pain, and had complaints of the effect of the pump: this is enough to cause you a real inquietude. I do assure you, I am perfectly well to-day; I bathed myself a little in the Seneca fashion; I sweated very easily and plentifully, and perhaps shall use the pump once or twice more, before I depart, in order to put an end to all disputes. Two days repose, will give me strength sufficient, and even to spare. I fancied the other day, in the heat of the engagement, that I doubled my fist; I can now cut bread, in a word, I am very well; time will accomplish that part of the cure on my hands, which Vichi has left undone, and I

can say I am in no sort of uneasiness about the matter. I quit the Chevalier and Vichi on Friday; I leave him in the fair way to do well, and consign the care of his health to exceeding good hands. We propose to rest at Langlar, where the Chevalier is come to see us. One day can do him no great harm. I am of opinion Termes and Flamerens will come likewise, this halt will assuredly be very diverting. Jussac is desirous to write to you, to inform you how much he honours you, and how much M. de Vandôme is disposed to love and esteem you, and to believe M. de Grignan in every point he shall be pleased to mention, at least if M. de Vandôme be not changed since, which he cannot believe.

Marselle is at Paris, we talked a great deal about all matters past. I think I painted them to the life. I see you do what you can to make me easy; but when I recollect how much, and how dextriously you deceive me, when you are so minded, I place my confidence on something very different from your words. I am of opinion people sometimes recover from their disorders, and flatter myself you will grant this much to our friendship, as to follow some of the regimen prescribed by Grisoni. D'Hacqueville higgles so prodigiously about the affair of the hotel de Carnavalet, that I die for fear he should let it slip out of his hands; good heavens! what need all this niggardliness for the trifling matter of six months? Can we better ourselves? Write to him as I do, that he would have the goodness not to make use of his own profound judgment on this occasion. The Chevalier and I are often talking of you; we are more apprehensive than you can be of the briskness, of your disposition, which wastes and exhausts you as Paschal was. Daughter of mine, did you but know what an impression this makes on the minds of those who love you, it would certainly move your pity for us. The *good lady* takes the waters in order to empty her budget, which is full, which is equivalent to saying, in order to fill it, and so on, without any end; we take a vast care of one another. These waters are so very salutary, that M. de Grignan might be at once washed, bleached, and cured of all ills in them; it would

would be no bad conduct in him too, to think of emptying his budget. All your bottle companions are constantly satisfied as to their health, and full more so of the fine weather and the beauty of the country. Adieu, my dearest, and most lovely girl, you desire I should now quit my pen. Do you not think it a very diverting little affair, to see the Marquis profit by the lessons of M. de la Garde? This puts me in mind of my pretty little boy of la Palice*. The Chevalier will tell you, we are sometimes in so good company, that being a little distressed for want of time, we put off using our medicines till we get to Paris.

L E T T E R CCCCXL.

To the Same.

Vicbi, Tuesday, 21 September, 1677.

I AM extremely mortified I have failed to receive any letter from you to-day; I am really cast down, as I am continually representing you to myself as ill: there is no placing any kind of confidence in that blood of your's, and mine is really not in the best condition imaginable. I hope I shall be out of this anxiety by to-morrow. Corbinelli is detained at Paris by a tertian ague, and a delirium enough to fright one. I fancy d'Hacqueville will hire the hotel de Carnavalet for us, at least, except Madame de l'Islebonne should take it into a second consideration, and so take it into her head to go to that Saint Remi: I think I could discover our _____ in such a piece of conduct. I am wondrous well, excepting this circumstance, that I could not stand the pump: the reason is, I had no need of it this year, and that it made too great an impression on me. I make an end of the waters to-morrow, purge on Thursday, and on Friday for Langlar. I leave the Chevalier in a fair way of doing well, he will find himself much the better by the use of the waters, and I believe may have entirely finished in eight or ten days. Adieu, my dear child, I embrace the Grignans great and small. Be sure the musket and half pike of the little Marquis be proportioned to his height.

* In letter of the 4th September, page 240.

LETTER CCCCXLI.

To the Same.

Vicbi, Wednesday Evening, 22 September, 1677.

I HAVE just now returned me a letter of the 15th. I fancy it has made a trip to Paris. The Chevalier has received one from the handsome Abbé of the same date, which shews me you was well, at least, on that day. It is true, that had Vardes mentioned your illness to me, in terms ever so little stronger than those he used, no consideration would have kept me from you; but he did so very well, that I have no food for my uneasiness but what is past by. My dearest creature, I charge you, in the name of God, tell me how well, and how pretty you are. I cannot, by any means, be without this piece of intelligence, nor can I endure the thoughts of your being less handsome at your age. Therefore do not fancy you can soften me, in regard to that leanness of your's, which is a visible proof of your ill state of health: mine is as perfect as can be. I put an end to-morrow to all my business, and take my last medicine: I have drank the waters sixteen days, have twice used the pump and the hot bath; but the pump I could not endure, and am sorry for it, for I love to sweat; but it made me too hot and giddy; in one word, I had no more need of it, and the drinking the waters was sufficient for my purpose. I set out on Friday for Langlar; my Commensaux, Termes, Flammarens, Jussacs, will follow me thither; the Chevalier will come to see me on Saturday, and will return on Monday to begin the pump. He will only be eight days without me: he will receive in my absence a thousand presents from my friends, and is very well satisfied with me. As for my hands they are better, and this inconvenience is so very slight, that I shall undergo no remedy but time only. I am perfectly in despair, daughter, at the frightful notions you have; my God, is it possible in my present condition, I can be capable of doing you any injury? It is certainly greatly against my inclination if I do. I do not know, whether you have any inclination to write me such admirable passages

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ges as you are wont to do. You could not possibly fail to succeed in such attempt, but I can assure you they would not be suffered to be forgotten: you are not sensible of the brilliancy of what you say, and so much the better. You have some small inclination to divert yourself at the cost of your little servant, as well as at her pair of stays and tippet: but you would certainly have fallen in love with me, had you seen the fine figure I made at the spaw. I have a notion the Carnavalet will do better for us, than that other house we were told of, but which is at the same time extremely little, so that not a soul of your folks could possibly lodge there. We shall see what the grand d'Hacqueville will do; I die for fear, least Madame 'Mlebonne should take it into her head to remove. I am in continual uneasiness about Corbinelli, he has been very severely handled by his tertian ague, his ravings, and every thing that is frightful: he takes the aurum potabile, we shall see the effect it has. I desire you would still talk to me about yourself and your health: pray do you use no method to repair the loss of your two bleedings? What a disorder good God! and what apprehensions must it give to those who love you! Here comes the Chevalier, and the rest of my old companions, with one who certainly plays a better fiddle than Baptiste. We could be glad, with all our hearts, M. de Grignan and I, to send you a chiaccone and an echo, with which he charms us, and with which you would be likewise charmed. You shall hear him this winter.

L E T T E R CCCCXLII.

To the same.

Langlar, at the house of the Abbé Bayard, Friday, 24 September, 1677.

I HAVE received at Vichi, my dearest, the letter of the 15th, about which I was in pain. I should have been sorry not to have known the history of the good curate, du Saint Esprit, and who is now at Semur; and M. de Trichateau, with whose gigantic figure you are so much offended, told us that an angel descended

descended from heaven, to come to wait upon him in this city of Semur, that was a saint of paradise; that his name, as well as the occasion of his journey, were equally unknown; that he made no kind of complaint, but was rather given to taciturnity: and that his merit, in this particular had so affected him, that, he had taken him home to his house, and entertained him with a very sensible pleasure, in having such a person for his guest. We listened to all this, Guitaut and I; and as I am generally pretty alert in regard to our poor friends, I besought him to continue his generosity, and that this person was assuredly a friend to truth. This is really droll enough, for I thought of nothing less than this good curate. I have been just wishing Guitaut to acquaint him of the merit of this person, and to beseech him to establish the favourable sentiments of Trichateau on this subject. So then the poor curate is somewhat comforted in his exile; if I am able to do him any little services at Paris, I do assure you I will not fail. Your spiritual father has interested you in this affair by so many useful and important advices, that I should be unnatural, should I neglect assisting you on this occasion. Your narration is admirable, and could not fail to have its effect: alas, my child! you know how much I am disposed to succour the afflicted, and how much I am offended with certain pieces of injustice.

The conclusion of your letter has quite charmed me; come, come away then, my dearest, and come with none of these dragons in your imagination, since the good Archbishop has pronounced, *ex cathedra*, that your journey was necessary to the interests of your house.

I wait for news from d'Hacqueville, in regard to this hotel de Carnavalet; but he is so extremely difficult on the affair, that if ever we have it at all, it must be by means of Madame des Coulanges, who smooths the way before him. You ask my leave to bring your son with you, which is what I approve of above all things; he will be perfectly well taken care of among us all: but know you who is quite transported with the notion of it? Why the *Worthy*, he averred he should never die satisfied,

satisfied, till he had seen the little gentleman once more. I set out this day from Vichi, for I must in my turn, indulge a little talking of myself. The good Abbe is quite enchanted at the sight of this terras, and M. de Termes seemed to me extremely deserving to make that tour, on account of that extraordinary and natural admiration he discovered, on sight of this fine view, which is indeed one of the most astonishing sights in the universe. I can never cease wishing for you every where, but particularly when I meet with any thing that pleases me. The Chevalier de Grignan will come down to-morrow, and returns to complete his medicines: if he has the luck to have the handsome Abbé in my stead, he will not be greatly to be lamented. The waters have done wonders on me; as for the pump, I could not possibly bear it: I was afraid of a fever, and these remedies, you know, are not to sport with.

L E T T E R CCCXLIII.

To the Same.

*Saint-Pierre-la-Montier, Wednesday at noon, 29
September, 1677.*

THE post is just going to set out, my dearest, for which reason I shall only say a word or two to you. I wrote to you from Langlar, in the Chevalier's letter: I had received your's by de la Garde. I left the Chevalier in the hands of my physician; he is going to use the pump, after which he goes to pay you a visit. We set out on the Monday, I went to lay at M. and Madame d'Albon's; on Tuesday I went to Moulins, where I met my messmates and Vardes, who had come from Bourbon again, in order to take his leave of me once more. He afterwards set out for Grignan and Languedoc. I shewed them to all the little ones at Valençois*, who are exceeding lively: from thence we went to Madame Fouquet's, who is no longer the same person, but who is respectable on account of her virtue, as well as her misfortunes; I supped, and lay at this place. These gentlemen have been bartering their

* These ladies resided with the nuns of Saint Mary de Moulins.

whole equipages, so that Vardes carries to Grignan the grey horses of Termes, and Termes carries to Fountainbleau the black horses of Vardes. I know not whether M. de Champlatreux may not think the pied horses ought to have some such permission; be it as it will, these poor horses have taken very different routs, which they would never have done, had they not changed masters; but so the world goes. We are now got with our said gentlemen as far as Briare, where we leave them, in order to take the rout of Autri. I told Vardes, that I begged him to give you to understand, that I had rather you were at Paris than at Grignan. I shall do every thing in my power to procure you an agreeable reception. You know better than I, whether we have a house at that capital or no. I have never heard from d'Hacqueville, so that I walk in the dark. All our company present you their respects, and especially *the Worthy*. Here is a billet for Vardes, in answer to his complaining of not seeing him this morning. I wish you perfect health; your blood occasions me perpetual alarms. As for myself, I am as well as can be, I drank the waters in the finest season imaginable, and declined using the pump, at least if I did, it was next to nothing. So, here's the honest old fellow de Lorme perfectly satisfied. I embrace you a thousand times, my dearest prettiest creature, I die with longing to hear from you, and to know how you do.

L E T T E R CCCCXLIV.

To the Same.

Gien, Friday, 1 October, 1677.

WE made a tour to-day after dinner, which you would have been much pleased to have made with us. In the afternoon I shall take leave of our good company, and set out each a different rout, some of us towards Paris, and others towards Autri. This good company not having sufficiently prepared for this dismal separation, have not had the power to support it, and would absolutely accompany us to Autri. We laid before them all the inconveniencies attending such a step, but being overpowered, were at length constrained

strained to yield. We passed the Loire in a body at Chatillon: the weather was most delightful, and we were delighted to see the ferry-boat return, to take in the other freight. Whilst we were on board, the discourse turned on the road to Autri; in which they told us, there were two fatal leagues, consisting of nothing but rocks, woods, and precipices. We, who were accustomed to drive at our ease ever since we left Moulins, were somewhat alarmed at this account; and the whole company, and ourselves also, passed the river ready to burst with laughing at this little fright; all our people shared in the joke, and in this good humour we took the road to Gien, where we all are at present. After consulting with our pillows, the issue of which will be, in all likelihood, to make a bold stroke at a separation, we shall go, our good company one way, and we our own. Yesterday evening at Cone, we visited a real hell, in which are the forges of Vulcan. Here we found eight or ten Cyclops a forging, not armour for Æneas, but anchors for ships. You never saw the blows of any mortal hammers redound so exactly, or with so beautiful a cadence. We stood in the midst of four furnaces; these demons were passing to and fro' at different times on all sides, melting in sweat, with pale meagre faces, hollow and frightful eyes, mustachoes like bears, black, long, and bushy hair, a sight, capable of terrifying any body, less polite than we were. For my own part, I saw no possibility of refusing to comply with the good-will and pleasure of these gentry in this hell of theirs. In short, we at length got out, by the help of a shower of silver, with which we took care to refresh them, in order to facilitate our escape. We had seen on the evening before at Nevers, the boldest race you ever beheld: four belles in a coach, happening to see us pass in ours, were seized with so strong a desire to behold us once more, that they must needs get before us, whilst we were travelling on a causeway, which was never intended for more than one coach a-breast. Daughter, their coachman passed us very rashly, and so close, as almost to brush our whiskers; they were within two hands breadths of

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tumbling into the river: we all cried out, Lord have mercy! they were fit to die a laughing, and kept galloping on, before and above us, in so frightful a manner, that we have scarce recovered our panics to this hour. These, my dearest, are our most remarkable adventures; for to tell you that the country is wholly occupied in the vintage, would be no very surprising news in the month of September. Had you been in Noah's case, as you said the other day, we should have been in no such a dilemma. I am going to say a word to you of my health; it is as well as you could wish, the waters have performed wonders, and I find you have made a bug-bear of the pump. Had I foreseen this, I should have taken better care how I mentioned it to you: it gave me nothing like a head-ach, only I thought I felt my throat a little heated; and as I did not sweat much the first time, I held it as a thing certain, I had no need of that degree of perspiration I had last year, so I contented myself with large draughts, by which I find myself perfectly recovered; there is nothing to compare with the use of the waters.

L E T T E R CCCCXLV.

To the Same.

Autri, Monday, 4 October, 1677.

I WROTE to you from Gien, in which I told you an hundred fooleries. Night afforded us the council we stood in need of, and which I foresaw, that is to part, tho' with regret, for good company is always very agreeable. We arrived at this place by a road, which is perfectly natural, and was charmed to have avoided that cross road, which is absolutely good for nothing, without any other inconvenience than that of passing and repassing the river. We found that same little Countess de Sanzei, with that pretty face of her's, and mortally sad at her being grown so very deaf. She is for ever in tears; and it must be owned that this is no small misfortune, at an age in which we desire to possess all the senses. I wonder how I could write you all this, under my affliction and surprise, at the sudden and terrible death of the poor Abbé Bayard. Methinks I dream
whilst

whilst I write this; it was the first thing I discovered in a letter of d'Hacqueville, which was waiting me here. He must have written to you about it, as well as me, but I could not avoid speaking of it. I wrote to you from Langlar on a certain Sunday in the Chevalier's letter. It was nothing but joy and dancing at the Abbe's. Fiddles, fifes, and drums, made a kind of country wake, but the most agreeable in the world, and with the advantage of that noble terras. This fine state of health was the general topic, I had been drawing a picture of it to one of our company who had never known him, with many praises, both of his disposition and understanding, as there was room to say a great deal of both. Daughter, do you know what happened while I was so employed? He lay then on his death-bed, just expiring: and on the morrow, whilst I was writing to him, that I was ready to set out, on account of the doings at his house, and which I am sure must have charmed him, he was no longer in being, and I was writing to a dead person. I do assure you I shrieked most terribly, on hearing this sad dispensation of providence, and it will be a great while before the impression it made on my mind will be effaced. I was really desirous to have seen him, to tell him the agreeable kind of life we led at Langlar, and our regret on account of his not being with us, as the most salutary and agreeable thing in the universe: and the very first line I read, was his death; but what kind of death! he was in perfect health, and had passed the evening at Madame des Coulanges's, with M. de la Rochefoucault; he had been speaking of me, and how glad he was to think I was at his house. On the Sunday he took some broth, which he threw up: after dinner he was thirsty, called for somewhat to drink; they left him for a moment, and on returning found him dead in his chair. What a surprise was this! and how prodigiously sudden! A person very frequently tho' a worthy man, may be a very indifferent christian; without confession or preparation! in short, it is an abyss of matter for meditation. He had an abscess in his breast, which burst all on a sudden and choaked him. My dearest, I ask you a thousand pardons, I cannot tell how

how to give over speaking of so deplorable a misfortune. I am well assured the Chevalier must be surprised at it, on account of the circumstances I have told you. I have wrote to my physician, to give me an account of that constitution I left under his care. I cannot tell how to approve of your thanking me for the friendship I entertain for the Chevalier. He can walk alone, and has no need of your assistance. You say I give a bad example in going to see you : and pray what friendship would have undertaken such a journey, since I have not ? a friendship that travels from place to place, a friendship without a *Worthy*, a friendship without any business at Paris, or any thing to unravel : here comes the Chevalier, tho' it seems you insist on his not passing beyond Lyons. I very much doubt whether he will obey your orders. As for myself, I am going to put the hotel de Carnavalet in order for you ; for, in short, it is our's at last, and I am heartily glad of it. I am perfectly well, and extremely satisfied with the waters, they seem wholly intended for my use and benefit : I stood in no need of the pump ; as I had no sort of ferosity, it would certainly have over-heated me. It was therefore wholly owing to my wisdom and good judgment, I left it off without my head-ach, or any the smallest inconvenience. I am in despair at the inquietude you felt on this account, the Chevalier will inform you whether I speak true or no. In the name of God, let us take care of saying any more such harsh things as formerly : see you are in as good health as I am, and I pawn my word to you, I shall cease to be any longer uneasy about it. What a joy, my dear girl, must it afford me, to see you once more fair and beautiful, and without any dragons. My God, what strange devouring creatures they are ! We set out to-morrow morning, in order to be at Paris on Thursday se'nnight. My son is not regular in his correspondence with me ; he was well about fifteen days ago, and he will be charmed to find we have got a house over our heads, and that you are come back. He seems to me as full of a tender concern about you, as you were on his account, and both, I fancy, have no great aversion for me. Is not this a pretty thought for you ?

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L E T T E R CCCCXLVI.

To the same.

Paris, Thursday, 7 October, 1677.

IT was impossible to have taken juster measures than you did, that I might receive your letter the moment I stepped out of my coach. Here it is, I have read it, and prefer it to all the salutations on account of my arrival. The Coadjutor, M. d'Hacqueville, the fat Abbé, M. des Coulanges, and Madame de la Troche, have played their parts as friends, and extremely well. The Coadjutor, and M. d'Hacqueville, have informed me of the King's displeasure, on account of the poor Curate *, and that the King had said to the Archbishop, " he is a dangerous kind of " man, and teaches pernicious doctrine: I have already been spoken to in his favour, but the more " friends he has, I am the more determined against restoring him." This is what I was told at first, by which one may easily discover wrath is gone forth against our poor brethren. You quite melt me with tenderness and concern, on account of your little one †; I take it, she must be as beautiful as an angel, I should be over fond of her. I fear, as you say, she may lose all her charming graces, as well as her good humour, before I see her; this will be a pity, your nuns of Saint Mary of Aix will spoil her; from the moment she enters among them, adieu to her charms. Could ye not bring her along with you? Alas! we have no more than this miserable life of ours in this world, why then should we deprive ourselves of these pretty kind of amusements? I know perfectly all that can be said in answer to this, but have no intention to fill my letter with them: you must, at least, have room sufficient to lodge this pretty child; for, thank God, we have got the hotel de Carnavalet. This is a most charming affair, it will contain all of us, so that we

* See the letter of the 24th September, p. 251.

† Marie-Blanche, grand-daughter to Madame de Sévigné, born 15 November, 1670.

shall be quite in the mode. As we cannot possibly have every kind of advantage, we must try to put up as well as we can without those little chimnies so much in vogue. But we shall have an handsome court, a charming garden, in a most pleasant quarter of the town, with some of your little blue gown girls, which, let me tell you, will be very commodious; and moreover, we shall be altogether. I wish I could retrench some of that friendship which is so dear to me, I mean your inquietude on account of my health; ask all the men you see how handsome I am; I had no manner of need of the pump, nature speaks aloud, she wanted it last year, as she really then stood in need of it; she would have none of it this season, so that I only obeyed her voice. As for the waters, my dear child, if you are really the occasion of my journey, I have a great many thanks for you, as I am now perfectly well. You tell me a thousand obliging and kind things, with respect to the desire you have to make a trip with me, where we might amuse ourselves with talking and reading together. Ah, would to God I could, by any kind of good fortune, enjoy such a proof of your amity for me! A certain person of our sex, told me the other day, that with all the tenderness you have for me, you do not make near the advantage of it in your power; and that even you were ignorant of my value and importance, with respect to yourself. But this is no more than a foolery, I now tell you, and I have no desire to please, but that I might, at the same time, share in your affection and your esteem: it is pleasant enough to make such a nice distinction; however, it may not be altogether impossible. To speak seriously daughter, and in order to put an end to this prating, I am more affected by your sentiments in regard to me, than by those of all the world besides: I dare say you believe me.

I have sent to Corbinelli's; he is well, and will come to see me to-morrow. As for the poor Abbé de Bayard, I can never get him out of my head, and have been speaking of him the whole evening; I will let you know how Madame de la Fayette puts up with it; she is, it seems, at Saint Maur. Madame des Coulanges is

is at Livri ; I intend to go there whilst our moving menage is getting ready. Madame de Guitaut has been brought to bed of a son, who died next day ; it was once proposed to shew her another child, and to cause her to believe they sent him to Epoisses. In short, it is a very odd affair take it all together ; her husband is come, to try to bring her to support this affliction. The lady of Marshal d'Albret is dead, the courier is just now arrived that brought the news. Here is Coulanges, who wants to have some chat with you.

Madame des Coulanges continues.

So then we have at last laid hold on this incomparable mother-beauty, who is more unparagoned, and more a mother-beauty than ever. Would you believe, she arrived quite fatigued ? would you believe, she has been keeping her bed ? She did neither, she has done me the honour to alight at my house, handsomer, fairer, and more radiant than I can express ; from that day till now, she has been in a perpetual hurry, which has done her no kind of harm, that is to say, as to her person ; for as to her mind and soul it is with you, and if it ever makes a trip, by way of visit to her body, it is that it may speak of that rare Countess that lives in Provence ; what have we not said of her till this moment ? and what have we yet to say of her ? What a vast volume could we make of her perfections, and of how prodigious a size would even the contents be ?

Besides, my Lady Countess, can you imagine you were only created for the people of Provence ? You were certainly formed for the ornament of the court, you should certainly reside there, were it only to take care of the affairs you have to manage there ; and you should reside there too, that I may have the pleasure of thanking you in person, for the portraits you sent me ; and, in short, you should reside there, in order to complete your mother's recovery : truly, my fair Countess, all your friends and humble servants wish for your return, therefore prepare for this important journey ; sleep well, eat heartily, we will forgive you, if you should not have grown thinner on account of our absence ; think seriously, therefore

therefore, of your health, and believe me, that no one can be more devoted to you, or more in your interests than I am.

L E T T E R CCCCXLVII.

To the same.

Paris, Tuesday, 12 October, 1677.

YES, daughter, when *October ends, Allhallowtide is at the door* *: I had thought of this already three or four several times, and was on the point of writing you the same piece of news, had you not prevented me. So then, this month too is past, which I am not sorry for in the least. You know a lady who is always loth to change a louis-d'or, because she finds silver equally inconvenient; this lady has a greater number of bags of gold livres, than we have louis-d'ors. Let us follow the example in our œconomy. My daughter, I must now have some chat with you, tho' I know well enough this letter does not go away to-day.

We are now about removing, my dear child, and as I know my folks will do that business better than I can pretend to, I leave them all here, and so rid myself of this embarrassment. M. de Marseille came to enquire for me the day after my arrival. The ladies of M. de Pomponne and de Vins came here yesterday, replete with the most perfect amity for you and me. Madame de Vins assured me of the good disposition of the Bishop towards a peace: he has got different kind of notions in his head, very different from those of Aix; and what puts it beyond all doubt, is, that he does not go to the assembly. I acquainted you how small hopes there is in regard to the affairs of our poor curate of Saint Esprit. M. de Guitaut, who is here, has strongly recommended this poor exile, and has openly taken him under his protection. He is under very great embarrassment, in respect to concealing the matter I formerly wrote you from his lady, who thinks her son at Epoiff-

* The French proverb is this, *Quand Octobre prend sa fin la touffaint est au matin.*

ses * ; he is afraid of the effects the discovering of the death of the child may have upon her. It is an odd sort of an affair ; these sisters must have strange heads ; tho' Guitaut is possessed of a thousand good qualities, yet the labour her projects cost her, appears in all she undertakes. I have been to see Madame de la Fayette at Saint Maur ; I was much pleased at her affliction for the loss of that good Abbé Bayard ; she cannot help speaking of it continually, nor can bring herself to bear it with patience. She lives wholly on a milk diet, and she has certainly the most delicate constitution that ever was. This is precisely what I find is your case, my dear child, as you do not know how to nurse yourself as she does. My God, what joy must it give me, to behold with these two eyes of mine, that perfect state of health in you which all the world assures me of, and in regard to which you play the dissembler, and deceive me so artfully, when you have a mind to it ! It must be acknowledged there is a deal of deceit in this world, for ever such amazingly long letters ! I cannot, for my soul, apprehend how you can possibly contrive it so. You are vexed at receiving three of mine at one time. Prithee, are they writ in the same manner ? Cannot you discern they are sometimes the work of several days ?

I am by no means satisfied with the health of the Cardinal ; I am well assured if he stays at Commerci, he will not continue there for any length of time : he kills himself with close application, which touches me very sensibly. I easily conceive your affliction at the death of the young Canon. I see, as you do, the visible hand of providence, in the obstinacy of those who refused to let him have what would have cured him ; he neglected taking the emetic which would have saved him, the scriptures must be fulfilled. We are always persuaded, that it depends wholly on us, to do this or that particular thing, and it is impossible to convince us, for example, of the impossibility of administering this emetic, because whilst we omit doing any thing, we will still believe it was in our power to have

* See letter of the 7th of October, p. 259.

done: and so the dispute will remain, till it be cleared up, with all our other doubts, in the valley of Jehosaphat.

I much approve of all your dinners at the several fountains, those changes are really admirable. Is M. de Grignan, pray, of the same opinion? Is he under a necessity to use this way to get rid of this holy bread? There never was, in the memory of man, such a long continuance of charming weather, and the rain seems quite forgot; there are only some old fellows that dare venture to say they ever saw any such weather, but no one believes them. Daughter, let me beg of you to make no scruple of talking to me of the gospels of the day, whereof every one's head is full; my God! why should we not speak of it? What a stiffness! and pray, why all this restraint and reserve amongst friends? I deny it to be any fault at all, but if it really is one, I desire never to be free from it as long as I live.

M. de de Saint Herem has been perfectly adored at Fontainebleau, so well did he acquit himself in doing all the honours: only his wife took into her head to trick herself out in all points, not forgetting abundance of diamonds and pearls. She sent one day to borrow all Madame de Soubise's fine thngs, making no doubt but she would certainly become them as well as she did. The consequence was, she was laughed at by every one. Pray, are there no such things in this world as friends? The fair Ludre is still at Ponci with her heavenly charms. There is a kind of grumbling at an extraordinary cold that *Quanto* has caught in the same manner as last year.

Livri, Thursday evening.

I am come here to lie, and followed close on the heels of Madadame des Coulanges. The Abbé, Têtûis here, and the good Corbinelli. The weather is most charming. The *Worthy* staid behind at Paris, with all my people, in order to move; he has caught a cold, so that what with one thing, what with another, he has determined upon this. I shall return on Thursday with Madame des Coulanges; I shall possibly lay at her house that night, till my affairs are put to rights. Adieu, my pretty one, the hopes of seeing you, the pleasure of expecting

expecting you, and of making you welcome, have a better effect on me, than all your waters of Vichi, tho' I am far from having any grounds to be dissatisfied with them. The news about *Quanto* are false, and the fair Ludre is at Versailles with *Monsieur* and *Madame*. Every body here pay their most affectionate respects.

L E T T E R CCCCXLVIII.

To the same.

Paris, Friday, 15 October, 1677.

WE have been at Livri for these two days past; Madame des Coulanges, who is quite well, and doing the honours, and myself being part of the company. We had the Abbé Tetu and Corbinelli with us: Mademoiselle de Meri, who was returning from la Trousse, came there too, thinking to pass some days with Madame des Coulanges; but this lady has ended the campaign, and we all returned yesterday to Paris. Mademoiselle de Meri went directly to the house of Madame de Mereuil, for her own house, was, it seems, in complete disorder; and Madame des Coulanges, the Abbé Tetu, and I, set out a making visits up and down to Provence, as did Madame de la Fayette to St. Maur, and Madame de Schomberg at Rambouillet. I thought of sleeping at Madame des Coulanges's, but then it was for that night only. I returned here to visit the good Abbé, who has been let blood, and who is still much out of order with his cold; I am sorry I could not help leaving him for this little moment. We live quite in the open air, all my people as busy as bees, in packing up for our removing. I encamped in my own bed-chamber; and am now in that of the *Worthy*, my whole furniture being a little table, on which I now write to you, and that's sufficient: I fancy we shall all of us be pleased with our hotel de Carnavalet. We think it comical enough not to have seen Termes, tho' we have been arrived these nine days: it is easy to guess he has returned to his college, and that his regent gives him not a moment's relaxation. I am not at all sorry for it, as you may very well imagine, and shall make him no remonstrances on that head: but only ask the Chevalier, whether after the great pleasure he took

in talking with me at Vichi, such an extreme indifference be not vastly singular. It would certainly be a mighty piece of indiscretion, should the lady stand in need of being directed; a conduct a little natural, is undoubtedly very extraordinary: but she is one, to whom it is impossible to do any kind of prejudice. Methought he seemed quite transported at Vichi on account of the vacation, as you tell me, and to be with a good sort of woman, in a full assurance of having no kind of demands made upon him. This repose charmed him; there is sometimes a sensible pleasure in passing from one extreme to a contrary. He was mightily taken with the infinite and perpetual talk at Vichi; you see what the consequence of this has been, at which I am under no sort of concern: but I tell you this, as I do a thousand things else. When debauch and the bottle are brought to a certain excess, I am persuaded they are more hurtful to the men than to the women; at least their fortunes are always sure to pay considerably for it. But let us leave Termes under the ferula, which discovers its severity but too much. As for you, daughter, you enjoy a real vacation, and make an admirable use of the fine weather; to dine at home in your own castle, is a very extraordinary affair; you write to me from Rochecourbiere, what a pretty place to date from! what a delightful grotto! How amiable are you to remember me at that delightful place, and to be sorry I am not there, to share its pleasures with you. Let us leave providence to dispose of affairs at its good pleasure, we shall see one another again, my fair one; in the mean time I will wait for you at Carnavalet, where I fancy I am going to have the pleasure of rendering you a world of little services, but which are next to nothing: you see then I am happier than I really deserve, since you wrote to me the other day, that little services were a more evident proof of a person's friendship, than any other; 'tis true, we cannot set too high a value upon them. Self-love has certainly too large a share in what we do on occasions of importance; *the merit of a tender friendship is then lost in an abyss of pride*: this is a thought of yours, which I would by no means choose to alter, as I find my account in it but too much.

I am,

I am, in regard to the loss of Bayard, precisely in the same disposition you guessed I was. Madame de la Fayette is utterly inconsolable. I have presented her your compliments. She was then living on a milk diet, which she has left off, on account of its turning sour on her stomach; so that we have lost this sole ground of hope, of the recovery of her desperate state of health. That of M. de Maine is certainly far from being good. He is at Versailles, where not a soul has seen him; they say he halts worse than he did. In short, I really fancy there is somewhat in it. Madame de Montespan went the other day to lay at Maintenon, in thoughts at first of only going half way thither, in order to meet Madam Maintenon. The King got into his coach at midnight, to go to meet Madame de Montespan, where he received a courier, who informed him she was at Maintenon. She returned next day; all this passed for a ramble, as it often happens. The Countess de Grammont is talked of.

Mademoiselle de Thianges will be married by proxy by M. de Lavardin for the Duke of Sforza, in a month or six weeks hence. It is a strange affair to leave the place where she now resides, in order to be in one of the most inconsiderable courts in Italy. You may possibly ask me, and pray how comes M. de Lavardin to espouse her? It is because he is related to that Duke, and has been chosen to represent him. The Bagnol's acquaint me she does not go to Grignan, and that she will be under a necessity to put up without Madame de Rochebonne and the Chevalier. So then it seems you walk out by moon light. So much the better, daughter; it is a sign you are in good health, since you are suffered to do so. Is it possible to form a more advantageous opinion of those who have a real affection for you, and who take care of your health? My health is perfectly sound; I am still in hopes we shall pass some little time after this at Livri, but then it must be after the *Worthy* is perfectly recovered. I embrace M. de Grignan, and M. de la Garde; I conjure you then, if you really intend to come, not to wait the breaking of these horrible roads. I fancy the wind begins to blow with an *autumnal* sharpness, as the almanack informs us. Pray

where do you leave your son? I cannot easily comprehend how you dispose of that boy of Saint Esprit. Comes he to Grignan? You know how severe they are on the poor Curate and Paulina; I would be glad to have her *canonized*. I am in pain for her godfather *, as you are, this thought is perfectly afflicting to me. You do not conceive what a prodigious loss this would be. We ought to hope that God will preserve him to us. He fatigues, exhausts, and indeed absolutely destroys himself; he is never free from a low fever; he thinks other folks are less concerned on his account than I am. In short, except one quarter of an hour he is employed in feeding his trouts, he passes all the rest of his time in philosophical quibbles and subtilties with dear Robert, which entirely destroy him. One may say, how comes he to destroy himself in this manner? and what the plague would they have him do with himself? In vain does he bestow a certain portion of his time in the concerns of the church, he has still too much left him. Adieu, my dear child, adieu, all my dear Grignans. They are taking away my ink-standish, my paper, my table, and my chair. O then pack up as fast as you will, I am not got to an end.

The young *Mademoiselle* † has a quartan ague, which she is very sorry at, as it disturbs all the pleasure of this winter. She was the other day at the convent of the Carmelites; she asked them, whether they had any cure for a quartan ague: she had neither governess nor sub-governess with her. They gave her a potion, which caused her to vomit a good deal, and occasioned a world of talk. The Princess wanted to conceal who had given her this remedy, which was at last discovered. The King, turning with an air of gravity to Monsieur, “ Ah, it “ was the Carmelites then; I knew, says he, they “ were a set of cheats, dissemblers, and villains, but “ I never knew before they dealt in poisoning.” Heaven and earth trembled at these words; all the devotees fled into the country; the Queen was very little moved at it; in short, what is said, cannot be recalled, any more than we can alter the belief and sentiments of the

* Cardinal de Retz.

† Mary Louis d'Orleans, afterwards Queen of Spain in 1679.

public, who pretend to a right to criticise on every thing that is said or done. This must be allowed to be somewhat original.

The *Worthy* embraces you: I think him really far from being in a good way. Had we been at Grignan it would have been a charming affair. My writing is naught; but my pen is a consummate bad one, it scrapes, and makes nothing but pot-hooks and hangers, so here I throw it down, to be moved with my other things.

LETTER CCCCXLIX.

To the same.

Paris, Wednesday, 20 October, 1677.

THE Chevalier certainly doats, and knows not what he would be at. I did not eat any fruit at Vichi, because there was no fruit there to eat; I dine in a wholesome manner, and if foolish people would have me sup just after dinner at six, before one's dinner is digested, I laugh at their proposal, and let it alone till eight; but on what do I sup, I beseech you? why on a quail, or at most the wing of a partridge. I walk out, I acknowledge; but if people would have me stay at home, they ought to cry down the fine weather. I have never been abroad during the evening damps, it is all mere scandal: in short, let me tell M. Ferraud was always of my opinion, and was often with me in my walks, and never opposed me in any thing. What do you mean then, Mr. Chevalier? but pray, Sir, with all your wisdom, whether or no does that arm of yours disable you still? It would be a dismal affair indeed, to be obliged to wear a stick the whole winter long. And you my Lady Countess, think you I have no cause to chide you? Vardes tells me you do not nurse yourself enough; that, to mend the matter, you eat the most pernicious things in the world, and that with such a behaviour as this, it is needless to think of recovering your health; these are his very words: he adds, that M. de la Garde is sufficiently vexed at it, but that none of the rest dare contradict you. Pretty Rochebonne, do you chide her for me. I had rather she would coquet it with M. de Vardes, as

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you tell me she does, than to lay impious hands on a constitution upon which all our lives depend; for it was your desire, I should make use of all your names on this head. How well you do together! How happy are you in finding that at home in your families, which is sought for in vain every where else; that is to say, the choicest company in the world, and all the friendship and safety heart can wish for! I think it, and say it again and again, there is not such another to be found. I embrace you with all my heart, and conjure you to love me ever.

I must needs have a little discourse with you, concerning this hotel de Carnavalette of ours. I shall be in it in a day or two: but as we are extremely well with M. and Madame des Coulanges, and as we are perfectly convinced they are pleased with our company, we are putting to rights, and furnishing your chamber: and these few days leisure free us from all the embarrassment and disorder of removing. We shall go and sleep in peace, as in a house in which one has lived two or three months. You need bring no tapestry along with you, we shall find as much as you will want here: I please myself hugely, in leaving you no cause of chagrin at your arrival. Our good Abbé frightened me, his cold was so great, and not to mention a slow fever he had upon him. I fancied to myself, that was this complication of disorders to increase in any degree, it would certainly turn to an high and continued fever, with a defluxion on the lungs, but thanks to heaven, he is considerably better, and I have no sort of uneasiness about him.

I have received a thousand civilities from Madame des Vins. I receive visits in the open air, from the Rochefoucaults and the Tarentes; sometimes in the court of Carnavalette on the top of my coach. I am at present in the middle of the chaos, by and by you will see the separation of the world and the elements; you will receive the letter I writ you from Autri. I should be more vexed than you, were I to let the post return without writing to you. I admire how I came to write to you in a tolerably sprightly manner, I who am perfectly in the vapours at the thoughts of writing to any other

other person. But even while I write this, I find what I have been saying is very far from kind ; how so ? Why I love to write to you, from whence it must also follow, that I wish you absent. This is dreadful, is it not ? Do you take the trouble to set this affair to rights for me, and take care you are convinced, that I love you with all my heart, and above every thing human. You had the good nature, it seems, to think of me when Vardes was with you. I thank you heartily, and hope with him, that we shall once more see Grignan. Were I the master of the house, I would have scolded you heartily for speaking with so much contempt of my music ; I am convinced it is excellent, since it has afforded you amusement for a long while. Arnoux comes here frequently, for he is a slave to his word ; but he is so much in vogue, and so near on the point of being admitted as one of the King's band, that it would be a piece of charity to give him his freedom. What pleasure can M. de Grignan have in detaining a man that is ready to die with irksomeness, and who may possibly imagine him the cause why he has not made his fortune. Were M. de Grignan to undertake to comfort him, it would certainly cost him a small expence. They say M. de Maine is better than was imagined ; people are now entirely freed from their uneasiness ; but then every thing human is so liable to change, that before you have received this letter, there will be both cloudy weather and sun-shine. Madame des Coulanges is at Versailles, I shall give her your letter as soon as she returns, and will inform you of what she says. I embrace all your dear Grignans ; I have been scolding the Chevalier ; and to make it up, must embrace him twice. I wish you had some water in your river, this is the season you must want it. The good company with whom I passed the Loire so merrily, have not been able to come here. I have presented your compliments to Madame de la Fayette ; I was yesterday at Saint Maur ; the weather was most divine. I have received a letter from our Cardinal, I was really extremely uneasy about his health ; he acquaints me he is better, and I thank providence for it. Corbinelli is far from well yet, his *aurum potabile* has dried him up.

I fancy he too must be put upon a milk diet. Good evening, my fairest and loveliest creature.

L E T T E R CCCCL.

To the same.

Paris, Friday, 22 October, 1677.

I HAVE no answer to make you, as this is not my day. I now write to you in the chamber of Madame des Coulanges, at whose house I still am: she returned yesterday from Versailles, where every thing is as usual. Madame de Ludre, that fair unfortunate, looked very cold upon her, by which she did not in any sort endeavour to ingratiate herself with Madame de Montespan, altho' the romps would have been glad she had thewn how generously she had drawn upon herself that indignation; she never gives into such a sorry behaviour as this. M. de la Trousse * remains on the frontier, to take care of the conquered places; this employ is a favourite's portion, and is what the Marshal de Rochefort had before him. M. de Louvois asked pardon of Madame des Coulanges, for having deprived her of the pleasure of so agreeable a companion for the winter: she supported this attack, never once blushed on the occasion, and never answered but just the thing she ought. The Marshal de Grammont is arrived, and has been received by the King after the usual manner, but is precisely the man he ever was, not in the least changed. D'Hacqueville went to meet him, and conducted him to court. In a word, here are no changes

* Philip Augustus le Hardi Marquis de la Trousse, was cousin german to the husband of Madame des Coulanges, to whom, in the opinion of the world, he had a very strong attachment. Madame des Coulanges had from nature a large share of wit, had acquired a singular facility of saying things uncommonly delicate and happy, which went by the title of her Epigrams; from whence we may conclude, what great pleasure letters must afford her, who was deemed the charm and soul of conversation. She was niece to the Chancellor le Tellier's lady, which, added to the friendship and connexions between her and Madame Maintenon, was the occasion of her making several tours to Versailles, where her company was always extremely relished; but as she had no kind of rank there, Madame de Sévigné used to say, that Madame des Coulanges's wit was dignity sufficient.

of any sort. Mademoiselle de Thianges * is transported with the thoughts of going to Italy; she is to be married in a month's time; you will then be here. People were disposed to believe, that M. de Louvigni was in love with Mademoiselle la G. D. and that the silly Janneton, but who deserved no such appellation, was the carrier on of their correspondence. The King said la G. D. would then be a little oftner at Montmatre. The Queen prevented the silly body from being discarded; perhaps ne'er a word of this is true, tho' it must be confessed the report is for the advantage of neither. Madame de Coetquen is big; and if you have any inclination to laugh at the news, I frankly give you my consent. Madame T. has found favour in the sight of Madame de Montespan, who saw her at Bourbon last year, and procured her an abbey of twenty thousand livres a year, for one of her sisters: this woman is so unworthy in all respects of the favours conferred upon her, that people murmur at this proceeding. I am now got into the track of news. This letter, methinks, has a little tincture of Copenhagen in it, which will agreeably recall to your remembrance my good Marchioness Lavardin †.

L E T T E R CCCCLI.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 27 October, 1677.

DAUGHTER, I shall ask you no more questions: what do you mean? In two words the horses are lean, my tooth is loose, and my preceptor has got the king's evil. All this is really dreadful. One might well enough afford to make three dragons of these three answers, and especially of the second. I shall not ask you after this, whether your watch goes right, for then you would tell me it was broke to pieces. Paulina answers me much better than you do, nothing can be more diverting than the little rogueries she means to be guilty of, when she says, she will be a *rogue one day*

* See letter 15 October, 267.

† Margaret René de Rostaing, mother of Henry Charles de Beaumanior, Marquis of Lavardin. This lady was extremely fond of news.

or rather herself. Ah, how sorry am I, that I cannot see this pretty child. I fancy you will soon console me for this loss; if you pursue the plan you have laid down, you will set out at furthest in eight days, and will receive only this letter at your house at Grignan. M. des Coulanges is set out this day by the *diligence* for Lyons, where you will find him; he will inform you how pleasantly we are lodged. There was no question about choosing the upper story for us two; the lower part is for M. de Grignan and his daughter, so that all will be perfectly well. I recommend it to all your Grignans, that take so much care of your health, to take care you do not fall into the Rhone, by the cruel pleasure you take in exposing yourself to the most dangerous parts; I beseech them to turn paltrons, and to land with you. Moreover, I find I shall be very happy in administering to you some of my chicken broth; the place you desire at my table, you may be assured is yours; the regimen which your Grignans prescribe for you is my ordinary diet: I agree with Grissoni to banish all manner of ragouts. Come away then, my dearest and most amiable girl, your physicians do not forbid your being received with a heart filled with the most unfeigned tenderness; be assured, I shall entertain you with many repasts of that kind. I am glad to find you in such disposition towards M. de Marseille; O my God, how will all this turn out! and how much appearance there is of rancour and ill nature in retaining such animosities for any length of time! they ought certainly to cease together with their cause; and indeed, why should one harbour a hatred, so hurtful both in this and the world to come? All that M. de Grignan is vexed at, is to find that your physician has more influence over you than your confessor. The Chevalier is very pleasant, in desiring to hinder your sharp blasts from blowing; it reaches his castle before he himself can, and will sooner compel him to quit, than all his threats can remove that ill-natured wind. The Chancellor * is dead of perfect old age. I have a thousand trifles to tell you, but these I reserve till I see you: my God, what a pleasure this! I wish the *aurum potabile* may

* Etienne d'Aligre.

prove serviceable to the handsome Rochebonne. There is no medicine so disagreeable, nor any remedy so difficult, that Madame de Sanzei would not take to be cured †. Our poor Cardinal's fever returns every moment; you ought to join your entreaties to ours, to bring him to quit so cursed an air; he cannot possibly go any further, by reason of a continual fever he has upon him, at which I am under the utmost affliction.

M. le Tellier ‡ is now Chancellor; all this I like extremely: it is good to die possessed of a dignity.

This letter of the 27th of October, is the last of the year 1677, on account of the arrival of Madame de Grignan at Paris, from which city, after a stay of near a year and ten months, she set out again for Provence; so that Madame de Sévigné's letters begin again on the 15th of September, 1679, and not before.

LETTER CCCCLII.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday Evening, 15 September, 1679.

I AM in the greatest affliction at not hearing from you as I expected. I met with a thousand objects on the road, which both surpris'd and affected me extremely. Yesterday I was at Mademoiselle de Meri's; and, to tell you the truth, am but just come from thence. She has got a fever, and is withal so overwhelmed with her usual complaints, and with her vapours so exhausted and so mortified at your departure, that it grieves one to see her: nobody dares talk to her about any business whatever, every thing is such a trouble to her, that it puts her into a sweat. She desired I would acquaint you with her situation and lowness of spirits. Good God! how I long to hear how you find yourself, after the fatigues of that wicked boat, for the boat is always uppermost with me: in the boat I always think I see you, and can scarce ever prevail with my distemper'd imagination, to fancy you now and then at your inn.

† Of a deafness she caught.

‡ M. de Tellier was then aged seventy-four. He died the 28th of October, 1685.

In a word, daughter, I long to hear from you, as well as of the rest of your good company, whom I most heartily and cordially embrace. It looks to me as if every one's care and attention were fixed on you alone; but, as you are a person of such high endowments, and at the same time such exquisite delicacy, it would be almost a crime to think of any thing else. I have seen the Marchioness d'Huxelles, who will take care to receive you at Chalons, as befits a person of your distinction; to her I address this letter.

I can, however, safely say, that I am perfectly well acquainted with the happiness I enjoyed in the company of such a daughter: of all the dear time I have passed in your company, there is not so much as a single moment I repent of, for how could I possibly have spent it to better purpose. In a word, those dear dear moments are now no more: I find my time has been too fleeting, tho' I could not perceive it; I poured forth my sorrows continually on that account, each day seeming as an instant of time. And I am so far indebted to your absence, that I now have the pleasure to be fully sensible of the real duration of my life. We have no manner of news here; and if I know nothing, I am free from the trouble of communicating the transactions of the busy world. The King of England is very ill. The Queen of Spain does nothing but weep; so much for the calandar of this present month. I could wish to entertain you sometime longer, but it grows late, and I must suffer you to take your rest, so I wish you a very good night. Is it to be imagined I should yet be in the dark, as to what may have happened to that boat which I lost sight of, to my great sorrow and mortification. But if it be true you have really not written, I have at least the satisfaction to believe the fault is not at your door, and that I shall be happy in the receipt of your letter to-morrow. This is the point on which every thing depends with me, and this is all I have in exchange for the dear, but now lost satisfaction, of spending whole days, and whole nights in your most delightful company.

LETTER CCCCLIII.

To the Same.

Paris, Monday, 15 September, 1679.

I EXPECTED your letter with the utmost impatience, as I was under vast anxiety to be informed of your situation: I assure you I could never, without bursting into a flood of tears, think of what you told me in regard to your reflexions and repentance on my account. O my dearest daughter, what can you mean, by mentioning the words repentance and pardon! For, I do assure you, I am blind to every thing besides your amiable qualities; and such is the softness of my heart towards you, that notwithstanding my sensibility is extreme, with regard to whatever bears the smallest relation to you, one single word, one embrace, one gentle, or one tender expression disarms me, and cures me in an instant, as it were, by the charm of some enchantress: I have mentioned this to you oftner than once, and 'tis unquestionably true. I persuade myself you have no intention of making any bad use of this, tho' it is very plain you keep my mind in a perpetual flutter and agitation: how it comes to pass, the Lord above only knows. Would to God, daughter, I could once more see you at the hotel de Carnavalette, not for such a paltry term as eight days, nor to do penance; but that I may again strain you to my bosom, and may have it in my power to prove to you, beyond all possibility of a doubt, how unhappy I am, and must ever be, without you; and that the mortifications which proceed from my affection for you, are infinitely more pleasing to me, than that deceitful appearance of tranquillity I seem to enjoy in your absence, your most distressful absence! Were you to unbosom yourself a little more, you could not be so unjust to me as you are. Speak, lay open your sentiments, for I assure you, we are no conjurers here. You must speak out, to be understood, as there is no other means of communicating our ideas but by words. O, 'tis a happy thing, this same sincerity. But time will, in all probability, make you fully sensible of this truth.

You

You describe extremely well your manner of living in that boat of yours; you lay, I find in your own bed, tho' I much doubt whether you slept so well as those who lay on straw. I congratulate the young Marquis on his good fortune, in having that silly little boy with him; his ill example will be of more service to him than all the lessons in the world. We are extremely desirous, as I imagine, to be the very reverse of what seems to us so very much in the wrong. I have no news of your brother; pray what think you of this piece of forgetfulness? I was to visit Mademoiselle de Meri yesterday, and found her pretty easy. 'Tis still, however, a matter of some difficulty to converse with her; she flies out often on the slightest occasions, even when one imagines one has hit her humour to the greatest exactness, but, however, she is certainly much better: I shall return to visit her from Livri, where I am now going with my good Abbé and Corbinelli. There another truth I must tell you in your ear, which is this, that I am not as yet sufficiently used to the sight of you, and to the extreme joy I always found in calling on you and being with you, to be able to overcome the pain I feel from your absence: I am going once more to search for you again at Livri, which you have rendered the most disagreeable place in nature to me. I saw yesterday Madame de Lavardin and Mons. de la Rochefoucault, whose grandson is so ill as to give him no small uneasiness. M. de Toulangeon * died lately at Bearn; the Count de Grammont has got his Lieutenancy of the King, on condition of resigning it, after some time, to Mons. de Feuquiere's second son, in consideration of an hundred thousand livres. The Queen of Spain † is eternally crying out, Lord have mercy upon us, and is every body's most humble servant. I cannot conceive how her Spanish pride can agree with those fits of low spirits. The other day she detained the King beyond

* Henry de Grammont, Count de Toulangeon, brother to Philibert Count de Grammont.

† Marie-Louise, eldest daughter of MONSIEUR, and of Henrietta of England, was married at Fontainebleau, the 31st August preceding, to the Prince of Conti, as proxy for the King of Spain (Charles II.)

his hour of going to mass: the King told her, "Madame, don't you think it would be a very pretty thing, should the Catholic Queen hinder his most Christian Majesty from hearing mass?" 'Tis thought none of them would take it ill to be rid of this most Catholic personage. I swear, my dear, I have not the courage to reflect on the continuance of your absence in the gross; and, in order to soften this thought, and above all to do myself justice for the numberless trespasses you have committed against me, never to cease thinking of me as your prime friend and ally, and to be still more persuaded of this truth than heretofore: I, on my part, shall be fully so of your goodness and render affection towards me. Madame de la Fayette embraces you, and beseeches you would continue this new friendship you have contracted with her.

LETTER CCCCLIV.

To the Same.

Livri, Wednesday, 20 September, 1679.

YOU are not in the least surprized to find yourself in that boat without my company, nor do you look for me with longing eyes, either at Auxerre, Chalons, Lyons, nor even at Grignan. For my own part, I am so struck with the notion of having seen you here, that I fancy I have a right to have you continually with me. I would fain claim the privilege of having the young ladies of Grignan and my little Marquis: in a word, I am so mortified at the notion of finding myself here by myself, that I no longer, as usual, with the time to steal insensibly away: no I would have it gallop, both to bring back that happy moment, when I shall see you as near as possible, and to wear off some part of those disagreeable impressions. which are but too strongly engraven in my heart. Is it then the being for ever occupied with these thoughts, which makes you say it is really no absence at all? I will acknowledge, that so far indeed, I think as you do; but prithee, what name shall we give to the sentiments which spring up in the mind, when the presence of the person is so dear to us?

You

You will allow the contrary to this must be something extremely irksome. I fancy just now, la Trouffe is by this time set out for Ypres. His wife would never be brought to take leave of him: her case is really deplorable: I pity her, as the cause of what she suffers is so like my own, her tenderness and too great sensibility; there is reason to fear the cause of her affliction will not be so soon removed. The Queen of Spain became a very fountain to-day. I can easily enter into the sufferings arising from your separations. I follow you step by step; as you are at Lyons, you must have seen Guitaut. I have an extreme desire to hear from you.

Wednesday, six in the evening.

I have received your letters of every date, and the last from Auxerre; this was extremely much wanted. I have now got you out of that wretched boat, where you have enjoyed only the shadow of repose; for after all, that conveyance is exceedingly inconvenient. I desire you would cease telling me, I have no cause to regret the loss of you; how can you pretend to be a judge, that I have not all the reason in the world? I do not know what may have come into your head: for my own part, I think of nothing but your affection, your care about me, your goodness to me, and your carresses. It is no less, I assure you, than all this I have lost, and this is what I regret to such a degree, that there is nothing in this world capable of wearing out the dear remembrance of it, nor to console me for so inestimable a loss. I desire you will be fully convinced, my dearest girl, that this affection you are pleased to call your only wealth, can never fail you; would to God you were equally well assured of preserving all other goods and chattles, as you are of this. I shall not repeat any more the affair of your journey, the particulars of which are dear to me: you are now at Grignan, so that the subject of my future epistles must be changed to talking about your easterly winds: prithee, tell me, the reception you have met with from them? and how do you find yourself? I must know every step you take when you visit Guitaut, Chalons, and Lyons. Alas, my dear child, I can think of nothing but you, and what concerns you.

My

My dear Count, you will reap a world of honour, should you be so fortunate as to conduct this exceeding delicate constitution, and you will lay me under the strongest obligation for it, even beyond all you can ever do for me. Ladies, I am eternally thinking of you. I am always on the look out for you, I search for one in the garden, and the other I look to find on the terras, but not a soul is at either; you have each of your share in my distress. My dear little Marquis, pray do not forget your own poor little mamma.

L E T T E R CCCCLV.

To the Same.

Livri, Wednesday, 22 September, 1679.

I AM for ever thinking of you, and as I have but little employment on my hands, I hatch a thousand various thoughts. I am here alone: Corbinelli is at Paris; my mornings are all spent in solitude. It really appears to me child, that I cannot live without you. I find I have made so trifling a progress in this career, and it is to me so vast a mortification to be without you, that I am induced to draw this inference from it, that there is no good like the present, and that it is dangerous to accustom oneself to company so singularly excellent; the being torn from it is past comprehension; I feel it, my dearest, in all its terrors; as for your part, you have no leisure to know what it means. I am already too sensibly affected with the thoughts of seeing you again, and with the pain of your absence; the very notion of it appears to me insupportable. I am every morning in the garden you so well know, and am hunting about for you in every corner; there is not an alley in it where I have ever seen you, but gives me the vapours. You see what an impression the smallest trifles, which have any connexion with you, make on this poor brain of mine. But I should have said no more about this kind of weakness, which I am persuaded you divert yourself with, had not your letter of to-day happened to make some little mention of the easterly winds: I take upon me to answer for nothing, and
I know

I know not a single jot of news. You are to-day at Lyons, and will be at Grignan by the time this comes to hand. I expect the detail of the rest of your journey after leaving Auxerre. I find here are getting up in the night, which are every whit as hurtful to me as they are to the ladies of Grignan. But prithee why all this stir, since you were not to set out till three in the morning? One would have thought you might have had your sleep out. But I find there is no such thing as a sound nap in that vehicle of yours; but tho' I was going to tell you a deal more in relation to all this, the notion came into my head, that as you must receive this my epistle at Grignan, you must be entirely at a loss what to make of this discourse about that boat. For which reason I shall change my topic.

Mademoiselle de Meri acquaints me, she is just as I left her: she begs I would let you know so much, that you should not be offended, should her head prevent her writing to you. Madame des Coulanges came yesterday pretty late in the evening with her sister; she has quitted Paris at last, her shortness of breath has not left her. She tells me Mons. de la Rocheignon * was very ill of the small-pox. Du Chene has called a consultation of all the physicians in the nation; his fever is increased, and the pock has dried up and become green: all this is very bad, and might afford us a very copious matter of reflection. Here's a footman from Madame des Coulanges: he comes from Paris, and assures me Mons. de la Rocheignon is better: my poor girl, I humbly ask your pardon for my too hasty news †. My son fills all his letters with something about you, and in tel-

* Grandson to Mons. de la Rochefoucault.

† Madame de Grignan, on being made acquainted with any ill news, used to take it for granted, and composed her mind as if the worst had really happened; but on being afterwards informed, that the account she had received was without foundation, or that the person was recovered, who had been represented to her as just expiring; she would say, by way of pleasantry, I do not like people should change my notion of things; must I then lose all my past reflections: it is easy to see, this expression is a mere pleasantry between the mother and her daughter. See Letter, 21 November, 1670.

ling me how much he shares in my concern at parting from you ; he has great reason so to do, and it will be a prodigious while before I can reconcile myself to this abominable separation. Your amiable letters are the sole comfort of my life, I read them over and over, and proceed in this manner. I entirely forget every thing that has but the smallest appearance of distance or indifference. I fancy to myself this can never come from you, but all the tender expressions you ever made use of to me, whether by letter or by word of mouth, I am sure to represent to myself, as proceeding from the very bottom of your heart. Will this satisfy you, my beauty ? Is this affectionate enough for you ? And can you ever suffer yourself to doubt my sentiments, after my assuring you, in the most solemn manner, that I really follow this method ?

Your brother appears to me to enjoy the utmost object of his wishes, that is, he eats and lies well, and so forth. He has been more than once sent as deputy from the Noblesse to M. de Chaulnes ; 'tis a piece of civility shewn to new comers. Some other season, we may possibly hope to see the fruits of this friendship of Monsi. and Madame de Chaulnes. The King has abated us eight hundred thousand livres ; so we get off for two millions two hundred thousand livres, which is an absolute trifle. Adieu, my dear pretty one. If hearing that the Emperor *, and Don John of Austria † are at the last gasp, can give you any pleasure, be assured you have no reason to fear they will ever recover. A Queen of Spain, with the proviso she had a head, might make a noble figure in the present conjuncture : 'tis said, she wept excessively on taking leave of the King ; and that on pronouncing the last adieu, they embraced each other again and again, with redoubled sobbing and sighing : what dreadful things are these same separations !

* The Emperor Leopold Ignatius did not die before the 5th of May, 1705.

† Don John of Austria, natural son of Philip IV. King of Spain, died the 17th of September, 1679.

LETTERS OF THE
LETTER CCCCLVI.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 27 September, 1679.

I AM come hither for a day or two with the honest Abbé, on a world of small matters. Alas, daughter, what a dreadful thing is the remembrance of your departure! I cannot yet support the thoughts of it. I am told I ought to banish it from me, but the mischief of it is, it will always return. It is now just fifteen days since I saw and embraced you: how shall I summon up courage to pass a month, nay two months, three months, without my dear girl? It seems a kind of eternity to me. But let us rather talk about the unspeakable fatigue of your journey.

Pray, what do you mean by taking the Burgundy road, since it is so terrible an one? For dispatch no doubt, I can easily guess the reason. In a word, you are at length got to Grignan. I received your dear dear letters from Chagny, Chalons, the boat, Lyons, all at once. I was right in my reckoning, since I concluded you must be at Lyons on Friday; I had not seen Mons. de Gardes, but I had foreseen all the fine compliments that passed at Chalons; I had read of all the fine weather that had attended you thither, and the battle between the sun and moon, which of the two should do you the greatest service: I knew of your lying at Madame de Rochebonne's, but knew not she had so fine a prospect from her house. I do not rightly know whether it was on the Sunday or Monday you left Lyons, but am sure you must by yesterday, that is on the Thursday evening, be at Grignan. For I lay my account with the civility of the Rhone. So then, my dear, you are at last arrived at your castle: prithee, how dost do? and how have the easterly winds treated you? You must take some time to settle your blood, which has been so terribly jumbled by your journey; and for this reason, rest is indispensibly necessary for you. For my own part, all I want is one single sheet of your writing, tho' I had rather a thousand times suffer myself, than endanger

endanger your health in the smallest degree. I am very uneasy about that of Montgobert; the air of Grignan is by no means proper for her, and I am charmed with her for forgetting herself to such a degree as to accompany you thither. May I not say as much of you with respect to Mons. de Grignan? Your sole object in this last journey, was your complaisance for him, tho' he concealed for a long time the desire of his heart by a mask of politeness. You pierced thro' the disguise, and to this you have sacrificed your health, your repose, and your life, and the affection and quiet of your mother into the bargain: in a word, you have fulfilled the precept of the gospel to a tittle, which requires us to abandon all, and cleave to one's husband. Your's deserves it, but this very thing ought to oblige him to a more than common care of that health which you expose so freely, and with so much resolution, in order to give him pleasure. For my own part, it is my whole study, tho' to my great mortification, to no manner of purpose.

I have your brother's letters, which mention nothing but his pigeon. His quality as a new comer in the province, makes him much considered, so that he has a hand in all the public affairs. Mons. de Coulanges has had a violent fever, but is in a manner recovered: his wife and la Bagnol's are at Livri: I played them a sorry trick, in quitting them on Monday; I return to-morrow morning, and they set out for Charenton, on account of Mons. de Bagnol's affairs at Paris, which makes him more desirous of going thither than to Livri. So you see, my dear girl, I should be quite alone, except for the thought of you; but this is enough for me, and is a faithful companion, whom I never abandon, and whom I prefer to all other company. I saw Madame de Lavardin at Mademoiselle de la Fayette's, but learned no manner of news of her. They have both a thousand compliments to you. Madame de Os-nabruck has been to visit Madame, who received her with prodigious civility. The Queen of Spain, as usual, is for ever in tears. The people cried out, as she passed through the rue St. Honoré, Monsieur is too good to part with a lady in such distress. The King
told

told her, before Madame the great Dutches, "Madame, I wish this adieu may be for ever; and it will be the greatest misfortune that can ever happen to you, to set foot in France again." Madame the Dutches de Rohan, is delivered of a boy, so here's a third Duke for you in the house of Chabot. They say the Marshal d'Humieres returns soon; the war is absolutely at an end. The Chevalier, I believe, comes with him.

LETTER CCCCLVII.

To the same.

Livri, Friday Morning, 25 September, 1679.

I WENT on Wednesday to sup with the Marchioness d'Huxelles, and made her all your compliments; it is impossible to have a greater esteem for any one, than she has for you. She had been to visit me in the afternoon with the Mesdames de Lavardin, de Mouffi, and de Belin, and all of them begged me to make their compliments to you a thousand and a thousand times. The good Abbé and I returned hither yesterday morning. Corbinelli is employed about his own affairs, so that I may safely boast I am alone: the Coulanges and the Bagnol's set out for Charenton, so that I had the pleasure of being with them but for a moment. I shall therefore have only myself, and your dear and mournful remembrance; and shall try how I can put up with this company. Mons. Pascal says, that all our ills come from our not being able to endure keeping within doors. I hope I shall be able to keep within the boundaries of this garden and forest, so as to be out of harms way. The weather is quite altered within these six days, tho' there is now and then a pleasant hour. I was a considerable while in quest of you in the garden yesterday: I remembered you with a tenderness not to be conceived, but by those who experience it.

The Englishman has been to visit the good Abbé, on account of that cold that gave us all so much uneasiness; he put a certain kind of sweet in his bark-wine, of such sovereign virtue, that the good Abbé believes
his

his cold is as good as cured, and all our apprehensions are vanished. 'Tis the very same stuff he gave Haute-feuille, which instantly cured him of the consumption that would have killed him, and of his fever: in short, it is an admirable medicine.

I begged Madame de Lavardin to make your apology to Madame Colbert, and to tell her your reasons when she sees her. I shall pay a visit to the Mesdames de Vence and de Tourette, and in the mean time shall send to pay them my respects. The little Coulanges has been very ill at the assembly of the states; he is perfectly charmed with the care which has been taken of him, and with the deputations sent to enquire after his health; his fever has had no ill consequences. My son figures away like any thing; he is employed in certain little commissions, which are commonly given new comers, by way of compliment done them. I entreated Madame de Marbeuf to marry him in Britany; he will never appear in so favourable a light as this year: he has been for ten years employed either in the court or in the army, and has acquired some reputation: the first year after the peace, he bestows on his country; if he is not married now, he never will; this country is by no means proper for one in his condition. He must render unto Cæsar, the things that are Cæsar's; but I have wandered a little from the text; but 'tis not a thing so much to be regretted: 'tis easy to return to the matter in hand at any time, but it is no such easy matter to be a courtier and an honest man at pleasure. My son, according to accustom always speaks with abundance of tenderness of his *dove*, and expresses much anxiety about the state of her health. He had been to take a turn at the rocks with Coulanges, and both were charmed with its beauty: the part you have never seen of it, is much beyond any thing you know about it. Adieu, my dearest. You ask me what I am employed about; I tell you I am reading my old books, for I can meet with nothing new that is tempting; a little of Tasso, and now and then a little of the moral Essays. When it is fair I walk abroad. I think of you at all times, and it is now grown into a sort of nature; I regret
your

your absence, tho' I cannot reproach myself with having ever been insensible, in any degree, to the charms of your company and conversation, and to the happy moments I passed with you. I write to you, I read your letters over and over. I flatter myself with the hopes of seeing you, and am forming schemes how to accomplish it: I occupy and amuse myself with whatever has the most distant connexion with you, and by this means persuade myself I am not altogether idle.

L E T T E R CCCCLVIII.

To the same.

Livri, Wednesday, 4 October, 1679.

O THE sweet repose you enjoyed at Lyons! I foresaw it, my dearest, and I easily figured to myself the fatigue you must have undergone. Good God, how I am affected with whatever gives you uneasiness! You were as much pestered with visits as if you had been at Paris. I pity you, in having been obliged to leave poor Montgobert sick behind you. You had terrible weather when you went on board. How I dread the fury of the Rhone! and then again that dreadful tempest that happened at that time; and possibly to crown all, the easterly winds immediately on your arrival. My dearest girl, one's fears are never at an end, when one loves with so much tenderness as I love you. I am in hourly expectation of your letters; they are the sole consolation of my life; but I die with fear, lest your writing to me should occasion you any inconvenience; there is, in good troth, very little of the Stoic philosopher in me: but, in short, it is my fate, and I consent it should be so, since you will needs have it so: your answers are too amiable to forego this pleasure. I must be allowed to make use of this term with regard to a passage in your letter, where you seem convinced of the truth of what I told you of the sincere return of my affection. But why do I say return, since you never were without it? I discovered a coldness which I was at a loss to account for, any more than for your indifference towards poor Corbinelli: I must not conceal

ceal from you, that I was sensibly touched by it, it was impossible not to see it : I was however so fully persuaded the injustice you did so deserving a friend, and saw daily such evident marks of it, as perfectly astomished me : good God ! how opposite a behaviour did he merit at your hands ! with what prudence and discretion has he not borne this unmerited disgrace ! I found him always the same man, that is to say, wholly employing all the application and address he was master of, to do you real service.

I did not expect you should take the trouble to answer my long letter from Lyons ; you laid aside all other business to read it ; was not this charmingly done of you ? With regard to myself, I am at present in a solitary and melancholy situation, but which I prefer to the best company the world can afford ; 'tis a charming place for one in my present humour : here are glades and alleys filled with a kind of sacred-horror, which is interrupted by nothing but the gallantries of our deer ; for my part, I am charmed with this retirement. Corbinelli is at Paris, the Coulanges at Charenton : I have made them acquainted with all you writ in relation to them. It is true, something has been talked about Chantilli ; but it was presently dropt, so there is nothing further to be said in regard to that affair. Now I am talking of Chantilli, I was really vastly mortified on honest Herbert's account. Gourville, it seems, wanted Herbert to let him know all that passed in the hotel de Condé. The latter, willing to oblige his patron, acquainted him with certain transactions ; some secret enemies and people who envied him, took care to blow the coal, so that he is now out of favour, only for having had the misfortune to be suspected ; the manner, however, in which he bears it, is a proof of his innocence : I assure you, my esteem for him has not been lessened on that account ; and I shall never be easy, till I have placed him in some comfortable situation : he has extreme good sense, writes exceedingly well, and has, like the shepherd in the fable, proved the ingratitude of courts * ; should he find my livery in his

* See Fontaine's fable of the King and the shepherd.

chest, I have a notion he would be apt to cry out, *charming treasure*, I resume thee with joy †.

I have had a letter from Madame de Vins, desiring me, after I leave Fontainbleau, to meet her at Pomponne, which I shall certainly do; Mademoiselle de Meri is really an object of compassion; I frequently send to enquire after her health, and shall see her in some of my jaunts to Paris. The good Abbé is extremely well at this place; his Englishman has cured him of his cold too, by putting somewhat, but the Lord knows what, amongst his bark. Were it not for a certain timerousness, that commonly attends one after a great illness, he might very well undertake his journey into Britainy: but he is exactly in the same case with me, at the time when I used to retire at half an hour past three, for fear of the evening damps. The Abbé de Grignan informs me, the waters have done him a deal of good within this last week. My dear girl, do not think much of the letters, I am only chatting a little with you, 'tis, I assure you, my only occupation. I beg the favour of you not to be guilty of *felo de se* on my account, and let me not have the mortification to think, I have contributed to shorten a life, to save which I would willingly lay down my own: I am now taking physic, and am to drink the waters Madame de Lavardin says such wonders of, and shall observe her regimen under every aspect of the moon and planets: in short, I find myself much better after it, begging pardon of the linseed tea. Be sure you make me a proper indemnification for all my care, you know very well how. My son loses no opportunity of writing to me. He cuts an extraordinary fine figure at the meeting of the estates, where he is a man of the first consideration; I only fear he may become but too good a Breton. He mentions you with a world of concern; I endeavour to accommodate matters, by telling him you are his dove, and that you love him to distraction. I'll take care to tell your Madame de Chat all my fine vagaries, take my word for it. Adieu, my dear creature, I embrace

† He had formerly lived with Madame de Sévigné, and had been taken into the service of the family of Condé, by Gourville's means.

you with the most ardent affection; were I not alone, my letters would not have been too tedious; but do not be led astray by this wicked example, it is because I have nothing else to do.

LETTER CCCCLIX.

To the Same.

Livri, Friday, 6 October, 1679.

YOU had contrary winds I find, a thing I am far from being surpris'd at: you are pretty well accustomed to them, both on the Rhone and on shore. I fancy, they are pretty unwelcome guests, happen where they will; and I can easily guess how much they embarrass you. There is even some danger in them. I commend your prudence, in honouring M. de Vardes's bathing-place with your presence, rather than be so headstrong as to proceed to Valence. There is no contending with a whirlwind.

There came here one Father Morel of the oratory, an admirable person indeed; he brought St. Aubin with him, who remains here. I wish from my heart, Mons. de Grignan could have heard this father; he thinks it a mortal sin to indulge our pleasures, whilst we owe any thing; such an expence, is, in his notion of things, a real robbery, which deprives us of the means of satisfying what justice demands of us. He is, in short, a very rigid person, and there's no such thing as coming to a composition with him. But let us now talk of Paulina*; O the lovely, pretty creature! can I think

* Paulina de Grignan, born in 1674, and married in 1695, to the Marquis de Simiane, was taken notice of at five or six years of age, for the agreeableness of her wit, as well as the beauty of her person. Her letters were already looked upon as performances, where the pleasing and the natural were equally admired*. She was scarce entered into her fourth year, when she would at times let fall repartees full of wit and pleasantry†. She was not above thirteen, when she wrote at Madame de Grignan's request, a small piece of devotion, which the finest wit might have been proud of. It is easy to guess, how a person, thus favoured by nature, must

* See Letters 8 November, 1679, and 12 January, 1680.

† See Letter 27 October, 1677.

think I was ever so handsome as she is? They say I was prodigiously so at her age. I am charmed to find she makes

turn out, educated under the eyes of a mother and grandmother, whose good sense seemed, as it were, transfused into her. She excelled not only in the epistolary way, but also in making verses, tho' she never wrote any but for mere amusement. The following are some lines of her's, the preservation of which is owing to chance only, and which afford some proof of the truth of what has been asserted. They were written on occasion of her last journey into Provence, where, as heiress of the whole fortune of the Grignans, she was engaged in a law-suit with Monf. de Grignan's creditors, before the parliament of Aix.

Lorsque j'étois encore cette jeune Pauline,
J'écrivois dit-on joliment ;
Et sans me piquer d'être une beauté divine,
Je ne manquois pas d'agrément.
Mais depuis que les destinées
M'ont transformée en pilier de palais
Que le cours de plusieurs années
A fait insulte a mes attraits,
C'en est fait, a peine je pense :
Et quand par un heureux succès,
Je gagnerai tout en Provence,
J'ai toujours perdu mon procès.

Which may be thus translated.

" In my younger days, when I was the gay and sprightly Paulina, I was told that I wrote prettily, and without being a perfect beauty, might boast of some attractions. But since fate has transformed me into a pillar of the law, and time has stolen my former graces from me, the scene is quite changed, I have almost lost the faculty of thinking; and tho' by good fortune I should gain my cause in Provence, I should still find myself nonsuited."

Madame de Simiane likewise possessed, in the most sovereign degree, the talent of elocution, and the art of pleasing without the least tincture of affectation. Her conversation was gay and sparkling, but always confined within the bounds of the strictest decorum. But as the state of human nature will not allow of so many rare qualities without some alloy, we cannot help being surprised when we are informed, that the only blemish in this admirable lady, was no more than a small inequality of temper. It may be farther said in commendation of her, that as in this her heart had no manner of share, so it was never known to have lost her a friend; and her company was by no means the less delightful, nor the less courted on this account. As she inherited the noble sentiments of her illustrious grandmother, she loved justice beyond any thing human, and was a sure protectress of merit in distress. A soul elevated,

makes you think of me : I am very sensible you wanted no such remembrancer ; but in short, it gives me great pleasure. You represent it to me in a most charming manner, and I shall absolutely believe all you tell me on the subject. I am afraid she should have grown a dull moping thing in that convent ; how charming was it in you to take her out of it ! keep her at home my dear girl, and be sure you do not part with so exquisite a treasure, providence will be her guard. I advise you would not be under any apprehension of placing your affections on her, even tho' you should be obliged to marry her to somebody in Bearn. The Mademoiselles de Grignan had great reason to be charmed with their father's castle : but then good God, what labour 'tis to go there ! You should have told me, my dear, how you came by that flurry in your blood. What a dismal circumstance was it at parting, to entertain such just fears of your health ! I think I hear the roaring of these abominable easterly winds, that cause such a stoppage in your respiration, Alas, how can I express my sorrow for this, when I reflect on what I suffer from the notion of supporting your absence only ! I thought it was impossible for any torment to exceed it : but I find my present situation so severe, that I should now think that time, bad as it was, a state of perfect tranquillity. I had at least this comfort to me, in believing you would, one time or other, take pity on us both, and that you would allow yourself a reasonable time to recover from your fatigue, to refresh yourself, and to quiet that heat in your blood ; but I find you take very little care of your health, sleep little, eat nothing, and then you are always at your desk. My dear girl, if you love me, allow me this poor consolation, to think you are not quite neglectful of yourself. My dear Paulina, be good to your poor Mamma. For my part, I am as well as you could wish.

vated, munificent, and compassionate ; a heart sincere, sensible and upright, formed the essential part of her character. The solid principles of true religion, in which she was brought up, shone forth in her, amidst the bustle of courts and secular affairs ; and never with so much splendor as in the last years of her life, which she employed wholly in the exercise of the most sublime virtues of christianity.

We have now the most charming weather in the world. The good Abbé is perfectly recovered; his cold has left him with his fever: this Englishman is a divine man. We have no thoughts at present of going farther than Livri. There is a certain timoroufness which attends us after greater illnesses, that makes us afraid of going any where at a distance from help. You make me laugh by what you tell me of the behaviour of the two sisters; the eldest takes care, in her letters from Lyons, to mention all the great names she gives herself such airs with in this place: 'tis really good enough in the other, to let us know she is so earnestly pressed to go to Chantilly; what a droll piece of vanity, as if Mons. de la Rochefoucault thought of such a journey so much as one moment after he had mentioned it; he mentioned it to me, so as to let me know, he could do no less than say as much to those ladies. His grandson * had like to have died since I wrote to you. He has never since said the least word about the Chantilli affair. So here's a party for you, enough to give one the vapours; to be sure, we should have found it a hard task to persuade her off on't. There are some stiles I can never reconcile myself to: I had rather be all alone in this solitary avenue; we were there yesterday, St. Aubin and I. He read, whilst I listened, and at the same time enjoyed that pretty little prospect you know of: I wish you had some of this air we breathe here. We heard a French horn at the bottom of the forest, and in an instant heard something like a human creature rustling among the trees; and on looking to see what it might be, saw a great hound; what's that? cried St. Aubin. 'Tis, says I, one of Mons. de Senlis's Chaplains *. With that he burst into an immoderate fit of laughter; this is, I can assure you, the most important matter that has happened, or is likely to happen to us in this part of the world: you see I cannot want for leisure, since I employ my time in writing such bagatelles.

* Mons. de la Rochequion.

† Dennis Sanguin, Bishop of Senlis, brother to Louis Sanguin, Marquis de Livri, was extremely fond of hunting, and was often at that exercise in the forest of Livri.

I shall

I shall write to Pelisson in favour of Montgobert's brother, and shall look upon it as a duty incumbent on me. I beg you would use no ceremony in employing me in commissions of all kinds, the dearest amusement I can possibly have in your absence. Here's a gentleman I little thought of; it is a volume of Montaigne, which I did not know I had brought with me. What a charming writer he is! what a delightful companion! 'tis my old friend, but from its great antiquity, it is really grown in a manner new again. I cannot read without a tear in my eye, what the Marshal de Montlac says of his regret for not having communicated his sentiments to his son, and in keeping him in the dark, as to the tender affection he entertained for him. I beg you would read this passage (Madame d'Estillac has got it) on the affection of fathers for the children. Good God, how full of good sense this book is! My son cuts a most splendid figure at the assembly of the states. He has his most affectionate respects to you; he talks of nothing but your welfare, and is for ever expressing his fears in regard to your infirm state of health. In short, his dove is his only joy and pleasure: I take care, in my turn, to pay your respects to him; so you see I act the mediatrix, as Langlade says. I have an extreme desire to know whether you have rested well, and whether Guissonni may not have given some piece of advice which you have thought proper to follow. They say ice is very bad for your breast; you have now no right to prescribe for yourself, the affair is absolutely decided; your life, in some measure, depends on your future conduct. The good Abbé has been just telling me, I ought to ask Paulina of you; that her company would not only please, but amuse me, and that I am now more qualified to bring her up in a proper manner than I have ever been: I was delighted with his speech, let us lay it up for use; we will one day or other take it into consideration.

There is a notion came into my head, that you might possibly refuse to give me her, and that you have not the best opinion in the world of me. My dear girl, keep

your mind to yourself, if you really think so of me; for I am sensible 'tis a great piece of injustice done me, and you do not yet know me enough: I assure you I should employ myself with the utmost delight, to preserve all the wonders of the dear little creature. I address myself to you, Mademoiselle de Grignan, would not you be overjoyed at this? You should write to me, and tell me a thousand pretty things, but in an easy and natural way, without studying it; and above all you ought to tell me, how your dear mother-in-law does; by this exercise you would learn to write in an easy and unaffected manner, like us. I would have the young gentleman continue the exercise of tennis; and would rather wish he might be allowed to play with the left hand alternately, than give over playing altogether, and so by this means become more adroit. St. Aubin has a tennis-court here, and plays extremely well. I tell him wonders of his little flat-nosed gentleman, and am questioning him, how, from a state of hatred and contempt, he has arrived at the esteem and affection we now discover; he is somewhat embarrassed, he has his mouth full of hot peas, as Monsf. de Rochefoucault says, when one is at a loss for an answer.

Monsf. de Grignan, I am watching your motions. I see you coming; I do assure you, that if you do not inform me in *propria persona*, of the health of my lady, your spouse, after the horrible fatigues of her journey, I shall be prodigiously out of humour with you. Pray, Sir, is this what you promised me at parting? Let me alone, I'll take upon me to answer for what may happen. I am horribly afraid, you take but a slight care of that precious health. Should I be so fortunate as to receive her alive from you, as I flatter myself I shall, I will make you ample amends, I promise you.

LETTER CCCCLX.

To the Same.

Livri, Wednesday, 11 October, 1679.

I EXPECTED this letter of the first with a world of impatience. The rains, I find, have kept it back;

back ; here is another mischief of your separation, they blacken every thing. I assure you, I did not fail to figure to myself the most melancholy circumstances in the world ; and, to speak the truth, I cannot be easy in regard to your health, as I cannot depend on what you tell me, and even Monsf. de Grignan says not one word about it. Poor Montgobert, the only soul in whom I can place any confidence, is ill : the young ladies of Grignan dare say nothing but what you think fit ; so poor I am abandoned to the mercy of my distempered imagination. The chilness in your legs you made so slight of, at least before me, gives me incredible pain ; I would have you to know, I think it a thing by no means to be neglected ; were I in your place, I should follow Guissonni's advice, and he is far from thinking this illness a thing to be neglected ; I would make the journey he prescribes you, I would take my time, and would esteem it the most essential piece of business I had in the world ; and would not leave my poor limbs benumbed, dead, and insensible as you do ; I would, I assure you, warm and raise them to life : I would, in short, remove those cruel torments they make me suffer every night in the world. It is really not to live at all, to live under so much uneasiness. I would make you take this very journey, were I in Monsf. de Grignan's place, and had as much to say with you as he has. In short, you are very right, in believing, that I often employ my thoughts about all these things, and that all the philosophy, resignation, and distractions in the universe, cannot possibly divert me from thinking of them. When I am abroad in the world, I put up with them as well as I can : but then to say this thought is not in the strongest manner engraved in my heart, ah, my dear girl, you are too well acquainted with the nature of friendship not to know this. You mention my health with abundance of propriety, for I never was better in my whole life ; have told it you twenty times over, you are wholly taken up with my health and me, whilst I am uneasy, and with too much reason, about your illness. Guissonni will have me be blooded, because it is for my benefit I should be let blood ; the English doctor says,

it is death for the rheumatism to be let blood, and that if I take away that blood which destroys the serosities, I shall be as ill as I was four years ago. Which of the two am I to believe? I'll e'en steer the middle course, I'll take physick once a month as I have done these two months: I'll take the waters and linseed tea, which is all I stand in need of, except what is still better, your good health. Here's a long sermon, my dearest girl, on a subject which can hardly miss being tiresome to you: but it is in vain for you to pretend to hinder me from being wholly taken up about you, in your present situation.

L E T T E R CCCCLXI.

To the same.

Pomponne, Friday, 13 October, 1679.

I AM now in the most agreeable company in the world: they had no sooner arrived at Pomponne, when Madame de Vins sends me a letter, to beg I would come to visit them, if I could. I went there yesterday evening; the master and mistress of the house received me in the best manner: but Madame de Vins appeared to have so great a regard for you, that I cannot suffer myself to doubt of what I before thought concerning her sentiments towards you. We had a deal of chat about your departure, your stay, and even about your return; for one cannot hinder oneself, as you said on a certain occasion, from making the future present to us. We turn every thing we can lay hold on in every point of view; it would be idle to repeat all our conversations, you can easily imagine them for me, and besides I shall never have done. Madame de Vins has writ to you, she will let you know every thing new she knows. I would have you signify to her, that you esteem all the civilities she has shewn me, as if done to yourself. Her friendship is every bit as convenient and proper for me, as her age is the reverse; but then she is mistress of so much good sense and good nature, that she must be allowed old in this respect, as well as you, who have experienced as many miseries as most young persons have done. I have told her of a quarrel that has
happened

happened between Messieurs de V****, d'A***, and the Chevalier de T***; Monf. de la Rochefoucault is to set matters to rights, and finds it so troublesome an affair, that, as Madame de la Fayette informs me, he had rather undertake to write an epic poem; I'll tell you more about it on Wednesday. I received your letters yesterday on my coming here, so that I am sure that for Madame de Vins was delivered. I go to-morrow to Paris; I want to see the Chevalier, and to take leave of la Garde, who, it is said, goes on Tuesday. I intend to save them the trouble of going to Livri, the roads to this place being so much spoiled. You will be surpris'd, and vexed at the same time, to receive orders so soon to set out for the assembly*; you will hardly have time to take a moment's rest. But then this hurry is attended with one very great advantage; for depend upon it, Monf. de Vendome † will not go into Provence, Monf. de Pomponne told me this with great satisfaction; so that all orders are to be address'd to Monf. de Grignan. I fancy the assembly is opened by this time, so there's an end of that; you see the good and the bad, the sweet and the bitter, my girl, blended in every thing: your stay at home cannot be beyond the month of November; but then you are now governors. Monf. de Pomponne is as sensible of this as you can be; I never in my life beheld so amiable a person; he begged me to acquaint you he was extremely mortified on a double account, both in respect of your absence and your ill state of health.

I embrace Monf. de Grignan in the first place, and I honour both of you for being so fond of my letters: I am quite confounded at your compliments on this subject; they pass so quickly thro' my ears, that I am neither so sensible as I ought of their value or insignificance. Such as my poor performances are, you will have but too many of them, as well as I of yours, tho' they are notwithstanding, the only comfort of my life: but then they are very sad things, when I compare them with what I hold infinitely dearer, I live but that I may be one day so transcendently happy. I find I have

* The states of the province. † Governor of Provence.

wandered out of my road; but I shall now return to it. First, then, I embrace Mons. de Grignan, and am glad to find he has sincerity enough, to acknowledge I give him a sketch of the manner in which he ought to love you; let him try to keep a little on this string, I mean only in what concerns your health: let them call it importunity if they will, I, for my part, cannot allow it any such thing. Whatever has any relation to the life of one we love, has never been accounted a matter of indifference or tranquillity. Had Mons. de Grignan been as fond as Madame de Saint Simon as I am of you, begging his love's pardon, he would have been far from being easy to see her in your condition; let him reflect on this truth, which shall be his lesson for to-day, since I am obliged to be his school-mistress in love. I embrace him then in the first place, and who next? why Mesdemoiselles his daughters, and that little gentleman I am so fond of, and Paulina, with all her charms; and what shall I say of you, my dearest? Why, truly not a syllable, save only that you employ the whole capacity and extent of that heart, you find so learned in the affairs of love and friendship.

L E T T E R CCCCLXII.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 18 October, 1679.

I AM come here on several trifling affairs; the good Abbé is here too, and is wonderful well. One of these affairs was to see the Chevalier Grignan; the sight of him affected me in a very sensible manner; I know how much he interests himself in what concerns your health, we had a world of discourse about it, and he is a proper judge of what I feel on your account. I thought of taking leave of M. de la Garde, but he does not go so soon, he is always employed about such affairs as give me cause to admire his goodness. Here we are, at the hotel de Carnavalette, and I think we could not do better than stop here. The *Worthy* presently took your meaning, in regard to the fitting up of your apartment. There came there in the nick of time,

time, a gentleman we have business with in the absence of Mons. d'Agaurri: he was so much convinced of the conveniency of this little alteration, and is to be the architect of it himself, a thing he understands perfectly well: he only begs to be allowed time to write to M. d'Agaurri, who is in Dauphiné, to obtain his consent to attack that old chimney-head, which he has no doubt of; as soon as this happens it will be done with all possible dispatch, and will be an excellent thing indeed. The only misfortune of it is, that it will cost you a great deal less money than you thought for. I must however allow, that this same hotel de Carnavalette is a most dismal place without you. My only support must be, the hopes of seeing you in it, not like a bird of passage, or a courier, but like an inhabitant, who has no business at all with that dreary country, and who resolves to breathe an air that agrees better both with her business and her health.

I am prodigiously vexed to find Paulina is driven from the house, as indeed I fancy you yourself are by this time. It is believed his Majesty will soon cause the negociations, about the marriage with Bavaria, by the President Colbert, who, it is said, sets out very soon; but all this is but building castles in the air.

I think I mentioned to you the quarrel between the Duke de V—— and the Duke de A——; the latter was returning from Bourbon with his wife, his Dutches de V——, and the Chevalier de T——. The Duke de V—— was at an estate he has in the same county, called la Morthe. He had entreated his wife to come there, and sent, at the same time, to desire the whole company to come down; meeting with a refusal, he came himself, and was received but so so; he kept dangling after them from dinner till bed-time, and every thing he said was a medley of menaces and reproaches; in short, he was exactly like Don Quixote, pistol in hand, threatening and challenging the gentlemen. The Chevalier treated him as a madman, and a person fit only for Bedlam. In a word, the ladies arrived in Paris in mortal dread, where the King being informed of what had happened, sent a guard to take care of Madame V——, so that she is now under the protection,

protection of his Majesty. What does the monster do? truly he waits upon the King, attended by his neighbours, that is, Messieurs de Conde, Conti, de Luxembourg, Duras, Schomberg, Bellefond; and with an incredible assurance tells the King, that the Chevalier de T—— had not paid him the respect due to his rank; mark the expression. “ Ah, Sire, says he, I want to know why I am refused the company of my wife? What has happened to my person of late? Am I uglier, or is the mountain on my back any bigger than before, when I was as much courted as I am now avoided? Sire! If I am ugly, is it my fault? Had I had the making of myself, I should have been like your majesty: but we have not our own destiny in our hands.” In short, partly owing to this natural and proper, and at the same time unexpected piece of flattery; and partly owing to the reasonableness of the discourse, the king was exceedingly pleased with him as well as the whole court. However, they are to be separated; the difficulty is, that he absolutely insists that his wife be shut up in a convent, which is a sad affair. M. de l. R. F. is employed to put an end to this difference, and to settle matters. I told you how much this disagreeable affair hinders him *.

My son is in a solitary condition at the Rocks, and has managed matters so well at the assembly of the states, that I am really persuaded, in less than two years, he will have the honour of that splendid deputation. He swears upon his honour, he loves you to distraction; I, for my part, will either keep up the fraternal love between you two, or I will perish in the attempt. I have paid your compliments to all the ladies you mention; the remembrance of you, is at once an object of joy and sadness. Madame de la Fayette has a mind to distinguish herself in this new acquaintance; it will not be her fault if you are not satisfied.

I embrace Mons. de Grignan, the young ladies his daughters, the little grave, sober fellow of a son; 'tis really diverting to think of this little character: it is by no means the failing of your Bretons. As for you, my dearest girl, I am yours, in that most perfect man-

* See Letter 13 October.

ner which Mons. de Grignan so much admires. I am desirous you should be for ever telling me somewhat of yourself; and I regret nothing so much, as when I am not entertained with some agreeable chat with you. My apprehension lest so much writing should do you harm, damps all the pleasure I receive from the perusal of your long long letters.

L E T T E R CCCCLXIII.

To the same.

Paris, Friday, 20 October, 1679.

WHAT! to write letters of such a prodigious length, and not one syllable about the state of your health. I give you to know, I have made the worst of this silence I could; I see the swelling in your legs is much worse than it was, since you avoid saying a word about it; and, to be sure, had you been ever so little better, you could never have been easy till you had let me know it: this is the very conclusion I have drawn from it. My God, how happy I was, when I had no inquietudes concerning your health! and how much am I to be pitied, on account of my present fears! It is not because your absence is an indifferent thing to me, who am so sensibly touched with objects, and who love your person with so much affection; it is this, the circumstance of the tenderness and delicacy of your constitution, make so very strong an impression on me, as to efface the other. Let me, I beseech you, be henceforth always acquainted with your present situation, but see you be sincere in all you say.

The Chevalier sends you all the news; he knows more than I do, though he is a little indisposed with his arm, and of course pretty much confined to his chamber. I was to visit him yesterday with the handsome Abbé, for you see I cannot be without some of the Grignans; but for this, I were an undone woman. You know Mons. de la Salle has bought Mons. Tillaudet's * place: it is paying very dear for it, to give a hundred thousand livres to be the substitute of Mons.

* Master of the wardrobe.

de Marillac ; I should prefer the being a subaltern in some military office. There is a world of talk about the Bavarian match : it would be diverting enough methinks, were an order of Knighthood to be instituted on this account. I know a good many, who will not believe one jot of it. I am convinced Madame de la Fayette has a great desire to serve Mons. de Grignan ; she is well persuaded how much I interest myself in his behalf ; and I make no doubt she will use all her influence over the Chevalier. She takes viper broth, which has recovered her strength and spirits in a very sensible manner ; she thinks it the best thing you can possibly take. They cut off the head and tail of the viper, open and skin it, tho' it keep stirring all the while, and even for some hours after. He could not help comparing this prodigious quantity of spirits so difficult to quell, to your old grudges ; and above all to those of this quarter, which are proof against all attempts to destroy them. Here are reproaches, calumnies, affronts, incivilities, cruelties, slights, quarrels, complaints, and menaces ; yet still they keep going, and there is no prospect of any end of them : we flatter ourselves, when we have once torn their hearts out, the affair is at an end, and that there will never be another word heard of the matter. Quite the contrary, they are alive for all that, and still continue stirring. I know not, whether this nonsensical observation may appear to you in the same light it does to us, but we are almost diverted with it ; there are a number of occasions of making the comparison. I see you are like to have business on your hands, I fancy you intend going to Lambesc ; you must endeavour to be in good health, and see whether you cannot make both ends of the year meet, they are not a little out of order ; the time will slip away by degrees ; I, who have been formerly such a niggard of it, am now prodigal of it to the last degree. I am going to Livri till after All Saints day ; I have moreover occasion for this small portion of retirement. I will have not a soul with me ; I will think of settling the affairs of my soul. I shall find the winter long enough.

Your pigeon is at the Rocks, wandering in the woods
like

like any hermit. He has done wonders at the assembly of the states; he would fain have fallen in love with a certain Mademoiselle de la C——; he did all he could to persuade himself she was a good match, but all in vain. He is going to Bodégat, and from thence to Buron, and returns with Monf. d'Harouis, and Monf. de Coulanges, by Christmas. This last has composed some exceeding pretty songs. There was at Rhunes, one Madmoifelle Descartes, your pappas * niece, and like him too, a girl of extreme good sense; she writes prodigious pretty verses. My son talks with you, addresses his discourse to you, adores you, cannot endure to live without his pigeon; he has deceived all the world. As for my part, I had always a good opinion of his regard for you, and that every body would, as well as I, were one to be acquainted with his private thoughts; how can one desire more of man? Adieu, my dearest creature, I dare not undertake to tell you how much I love you; I begin to think it will prove extremely irksome in the end. I have a thousand kindnesses for Monf. de Grignan, in spite of his taciturnity. I was this morning with the Chevalier and Monf. de la Garde, and am all in all with this family.

L E T T E R CCCCLXIV.

To the Same.

Livri, Wednesday, 25 October, 1679.

I AM here all alone by myself; I was loth any body should suffer by my irksomeness besides myself. There is no company in the world can tempt me to begin my winter season so soon. Had I mind for it, I could assume an air of solitariness; but after hearing Madame de Brisac saying the other day, she was wholly given up to her meditations, and that she had rather too much of her own dear company; I have a fancy to brag of passing this whole afternoon in this meadow, in conference with our sheep and cows. I have store of good books, especially Montaigne; what could I desire more, since I cannot have you? I have the favour of

* Madame de Grignan was so keen a Cartesian, as to call Descartes her father.

your

your last letter at this place. You fancy I am at Paris sitting in the chimney-corner, and you have, no doubt, sitting by your own, received my lamentations for the fatigue of your journey, what a dreadful thing to be at such a distance! In a word, it is impossible for woman to be in greater consternation than I was, to find you with *Monsi.* and *Madame de Mêmes*; I fancied you had been deceived, and that you were to have received them at *Livri*. They write to me, I find, in such a manner, as to give me to understand, they are charmed with the good reception you have given them: they are vastly desirous to see me, which is the strongest inducement for my returning so speedily.

You are in the right to conceal *Paulina's* modesty, she will be grown stale by the time she is fifteen: too hasty and ill-timed a modesty, may have sad consequences. You are in jest, to thank *Corbinelli* for the compliment he paid your good sense. He is the only man upon earth, who finds it a jot superior to that of other folks; and when he happens to mention it, he means no more than barely to say what he thinks, and by no means that of making his court to you. He would have said a word or two in my letter, on the compliments you were pleased to make him; but this I intend to wave till my return. *Monsi.* and *Madame de Rohan* have not thought of making him a present, out of the two thousand five hundred pistoles they received at the assembly of the states, under the title of the Prince of Leon. There are some geniusses very diverting; that of *Corbinelli* is to hold in the most sovereign contempt, what other folks prize in the highest degree. It is true, I was greatly entertained with his discourse, and that of the the *Abbé de Piles*; they agreed in many things, tho' there were some of harder digestion which they seemed to chew the cud upon. *Monsi. de Rochefoucault* calls this eating of parched peas; if this is a right expression, I am sure they had a good dish of them, for you must know this forest has the quality of rendering us proper to decide in matters of this sort. The fat *Abbé* has entered on his office of gazetteer, so you need be under no uneasiness about answers; he has rather a better style for a newsmonger than I.

As

As for your brother, let me tell you, he is an admirable man; he could not, for the soul of him, help spoiling all the wonders he performed at the assembly of the states, by a most whimsical fancy, and an insipid kind of passion, and perfectly ridiculous. The object of it is a thing called *Mademoiselle de la C—*, upwards of thirty, with not a single shilling to her fortune, and an equal share of beauty: even her father says he is very sorry for it, and that it is by no means a match fit for *Monf. de Sévigné*; he writes me so himself, I commend and thank him for his prudent behaviour. Would you think what your brother has been about since that? he never quits his *Demoiselle*, follows her into *Rennes* and the *Lower Britany*, where she is going, under pretence of visiting *Tonquedec*; he has in a manner turned her head, has put her out of conceit with a very proper match, with whom she was in some sort contracted; it is the talk of the whole province. *Monf. de Coulanges*, and all my friends in *Britany* write to me about it, and all are persuaded he will certainly marry her. For my part, I am persuaded of the contrary; all I writ is, to what purpose? to shew the weakness of this poor head, when there is no manner of need for it, after such promising beginnings. To what purpose make the poor girl refuse the match, she now looks upon with the most sovereign contempt? To what purpose commit such a piece of perfidy? since I am determined, let what will happen, never to sign the marriage contract. If he be really in love, why so much the worse, since this is a source of the most extravagant actions; but as I think him incapable of the passion, I should make a scruple, were I in his place, thus wantonly to wound the repose and the fortune of one he can so easily be without. He is now at the *Rocks*, from whence he writes to me about this journey to *Tonquedec's*, but not a syllable of *Dulcinea*, nor of this noble flame. Only in general terms, a world of fine things, and compliments without number. In short, it is an affair I leave entirely to the disposal of divine providence, for what can I do in it? I am, however, satisfied it will all come to nothing; I write him most elaborate letters, tho' I know the consequence will only be what God pleases.

Pray

Pray did I write to you about this same Mademoiselle de ***? Now I recollect I did not, it was to my son I wrote. She is married to Mons. de ***, who has actually had, contrary to my opinion, a hundred thousand crowns with her; I say, a hundred thousand crowns down on the table. This sum has blinded their eyes, for they are a greedy set. But with this, he has got the silliest, the most spendthrift, the most this, and the most that, that can possibly be imagined. Besides the expence of having been dressed out at the wedding by her father, like another Sultaneſs; ſhe has moreover thrown away twelve thousand livres on a jaunt to Fontainebleau, where ſhe got into the Queen's chariot, not a word of jeſt in it, gave fifty piſtoles to the footmen, gamed, and ſo forth, all to the ſame tune. At length ſhe thought fit to return; here is the miſchief of it; father and mother in the dumps at this expence, and curſing the hour and day of the match, and, in a word, going to eaſe their burdened minds at Madame de Lavardin's, who warned them before hand what would happen. The huſband came afterwards, ſaying, with ſimplicity enough, that it rained letters upon him from all quarters, informing him of his wife's paſt and preſent ill conduct, and that he was out of all patience. Madame de Lavardin laughed in her ſleeve, and tells it in a very diverting manner. In ſhort, not to trouble you with her answers nor her counſels, the ſum of the matter is this, the great fine houſe hired for them againſt their return is given up, and the journey to Auvergne has no time fixed for its continuance. Here's a fine hiſtory for you, and which, to be ſure, you are like to trouble your head much about; it is merely from want of employment, I trouble you with ſuch ſilly ſtuff.

L E T T E R CCCCLXV.

To the ſame.

Livri, Wednesday, being All Saints-day, 1679.

YOU muſt by this time have received the letter I wriit you from Pomponne, in conſort with Madame de Vins; but your ſtorms have put every thing in confuſion. How much upon extremes you Provence

vance folks are! your heats, your evening damps, your easterly winds, your untimely rains, your autumnal thunder and lightnings, all are in the extreme, you know not what soft or temperate means. Your rivers overflow their banks, your fields are drowned; your Durance is always as if the devil were in him; your isle de Brouteron is often under water. In a word, daughter, when I think of the delicacy of your constitution, which has to grapple with things of so violent a nature I tremble every limb of me: and pray, do not you think Monf. de Grignan, who loves you, is not as much terrified at the thought as I am? For my own share, it is impossible I can get rid of my fears, whilst I see you refusing the assistance of the most certain remedies. I saw the other day that little Madame de Nemond, she has been extremely ill of a pain in her breast, but recovers in the most sensible manner, by taking asses milk morning and evening; she was speechless some time, with a cough and hoarseness occasioned by it. I do not bid you take asses milk, as it does not agree with you, and you do not like it: I only lament as a singular misfortune, that you are deprived of so sure and so salutary a medicine. I am always regretting the time, in which I had nothing to complain of besides your absence; but what a dreadful circumstance is it, to be under such apprehensions as I am, and with the grounds I have to be alarmed! I have taken all the care I could of Mademoiselle de Meri, as far as was consistent with my solitude at Livri, which I could not help endeavouring to enjoy some little time. She is no longer given over past hopes, as she told me the other day, and even her health is not altogether so bad. Monf. and Madame de Mereuile, Madame de Saint-Pouanges, with my good neighbours Mesdames de Coulanges, Bagnols, Sanzei, are all taken up about her. The Chevalier is also employed in taking care of her; for my own part, I shall not be behind hand in my duty, as soon as I return to Paris: were we not so nearly connected as we really are, and did not the season and christianity prompt me to succour her, it were motive sufficient with me, to know such a piece of kindness would give you pleasure; nay, it were enough to

cause

cause me to do a thousand times more. You may therefore, be perfectly easy on that score, as well as in regard to her situation, which is by no means so much to be regretted as it was. I shall speak with du Chêne in relation to your little physician, whom we employ in killing a few patients in our quarter, that we have an opportunity of seeing how he succeeds; it were a thousand pities he should be deprived of the privilege of killing with impunity *. Not that the season is favourable. This Englishman's medicine, which will be made public, renders all your physicians, with their purgings and bleedings, an heap of useless lumber.

My son is in that dismal solitude at the Rocks; he tells me, that the first evening he happened to be alone in my apartment, with the keys of my cabinets which had been given him, he was assailed by a most dismal thought, and so much like an affair that is to happen one time or other, that he could not help weeping, just like the good Abbé on receiving the sacrament. He gives me the strongest assurances, he will never marry the little body I mentioned to you; all the world, however, tells me, there is a strange handling between them; he will needs go to Tonquedec's, which is but two leagues off his flame: it is the talk of the whole province, and every body cries shame on the weakness of his conduct in the affair. He assures me he has no great passion for playing the fool; but as I know he is weak, and is every day acquainting me with his variations, that he is two or three different men in an instant I tell him, the safest way for him is not to visit that girl; that it is a dangerous thing to tempt providence; that one misfortune is often enough to undo us; that whilst one of those men is duped, the other may have time, tho' too late, to curse the day in which so silly a match was accomplished. And that, let what will happen, I shall have nothing to answer for, since I have already, as well as all my friends, told him all that can possibly be said on the matter. I am extremely anxious to hear what Mademoiselle de Grignan's answer will

* See Argan's reception in Moliere's *Malade imaginaire*.

be, in relation to the proposal that is to be made you. I beseech you not to hinder both the little Marquis and Paulina, to come and divert themselves with me: I shall receive them as I now embrace them, that is, in the most affectionate manner. As to Mons^r de Grignan, I ask his pardon for the ill I have said of his country; I can see nothing there but the furies, whilst you are in it. I shall make my apology to him, on hearing of the fine weather you enjoy at Lambesc, and which, I must acknowledge, I have often admired myself as well as others. I recommend to him the care of his dear spouse.

L E T T E R CCCCLXVI.

To the same.

Livri, Thursday Evening, 2 November, 1679.

I WRITE to you this evening, my dearest, as I am full of the thoughts of going to-morrow morning to Pomponne. Madame de Vins invited me the other day in so courteous a manner, that I must go to visit her, and Mons^r de Pomponne, who is much more easily managed by taking one dinner with him at Pomponne, than by a whole month's soliciting at Paris. You would have me rely entirely on your care in regard to your health, to which I consent with all my heart, if there is any truth in what is said, of your being quite another person in this respect. It would, in effect, be so natural a conduct in you to do so, and your neglectfulness in it, has always appeared to me a thing so very extraordinary, that I am led to believe by this instance, that right reason has once more resumed its place in your understanding. Therefore, my dear child, do as you say, take milk and broths, and hold the care of your health dear to you beyond all earthly considerations; be persuaded that care and regimens, are not alone sufficient to recover a stomach like yours; no, it is from the continuance of this regimen you are to look for a cure; for to take milk for a fortnight, and then say, well, I have taken milk, is nothing to the purpose; believe me, it is indeed, my dear girl, it is only mocking us, and
yourself

yourself chiefly, to act in this manner. I would, moreover, have you to know another thing, which is, that without health, it is impossible to do ought; every thing is at a stand, and the smallest affair costs us incredible pain to accomplish: in short, to want health, is really not to live at all. The condition you are now in, is by no means a durable situation; if you would be well, you must first be better. I am sorry for the weather you have, and especially for your terrible inundations: I dread your Durance, as I do some wild beast. There is not as yet any mention of blue ribbons; should there be any, and should *Monf. de Grignan* be under a necessity of returning, I shall give him a good but a sad welcome; for in short, instead of taking order for your journey as you have done, it had been much more natural as well as more rational in you, to have waited *Monf. de Grignan's* arrival here: but there is no conjuring, and as you consulted *Monf. de Grignan's* will and pleasure, as they were wont to consult the entrails of victims in days of yore, you there read so clearly he wished you to accompany him, that, having no sort of consideration of your health, it was a thing impossible for you not to go, as in effect you have done. You ought to lift up your eyes to God, and to beg of him to grant you to return; and that it may not be like a courier, but like a woman who has nothing to do in *Provence*, who dreads the easterly winds at *Grignan*, and who resolves to settle and recover her health in this country. I fancy, I am fit to write a treatise on friendship; there are a thousand things depending on it, a thousand things to be shunned, in order to prevent those we love from smarting for it: there are an infinity of instances where we give them pain, and wherein we might alleviate their feelings, were we to reflect and to turn things in all the points of view we ought, out of regard to the object of our esteem. In short, I could make it evident in this my book, that there are millions of different ways to testify one's friendship without speaking of it; as well as to say by actions, we have no real regard, even whilst the traitor's tongue is making protestations to the contrary. I do
not

not mean any person in particular, but what I have written, I have written.

My son writes me strange ravings: he tells me there is a certain he who adores me, and another he who is the torment of my life, and that they had a mortal rencounter the other day in the tennis court at the Rocks. I writ him back word, that I wished from my soul the one had killed the other, that I might no longer be the mother of three children; that the last of them was the occasion of all the maternal misery I underwent, and that could he succeed in strangling him with his own hands, I should be but too happy in the survivors. I admire Paulina's letter; pray is it wrote with her own hand? I think not: but as to the style, it is an easy matter to discover the author of it. O the dear creature! I wish to God you could contrive to send her me in one of your packets: I should then be sufficiently recompensed for my not seeing her, by the pleasure I should receive from the charms of her conversation; I am now going to answer her. I quit this place with regret; the country is still agreeable; this avenue, and the havock made by the caterpillars, and which, with your good leave, has taken the liberty to sprout again, is greener than in the spring of the finest season. The palisades, both great and little, are now adorned in all the beauteous dyes of the autumn, which the painters know so well how to turn to their own advantage. The tall elms are rather somewhat bare, but that is no such great matter: the country, in general, is in all its glory: I pass the days alone in reading good books, and am not sensible of any irksomeness, but such as I am never without, the want of your company. I know not how I am to be employed at Paris; nor is there any thing I know of, to induce me to go there: I therefore do it with reluctance; the good Abbé, however, tells me we have business there, and that we have no more to do in these parts. Let us go then, in God's name. This year, I must acknowledge, has slipped away fast enough; but then I am entirely of your way of thinking as to the month of September; I really fancied it as long as any other six. When I get to Paris, I will send you

word how Mademoiselle de Meri does. I could never have thought this same Madame de Charmes, would ever have grown what one may call a dried chip: alas! what dreadful havock an ill state of health makes! I beseech you to make the care of yours, the first and most important duty of your life; next to this consideration, and Mons. de Grignan, to whom you have justly given the preference to all other persons, if you are but good enough to allow me to occupy the place that is my right; I promise you, you shall have no cause to repent it. I shall be satisfied to find I am not much behind Mons. De Grignan, and to find you grant I have something like a right to be consulted in my turn.

L E T T E R CCCCLXVII.

To the Same.

Paris Wednesday, 8 November, 1679.

I ARRIVED here on Saturday, as I wrote to you. I dined on Friday at Pomponne, where Madame de Vins received one of your letters. We had a great deal of discourse about you. Mons. de Pomponne chid her, for not mentioning his name in her letter to you: their quarrel was really diverting, and would have made you laugh. They will be a fortnight longer at Pomponne. As for my own part, I regretted Livri, it was touching me in the quick to make me leave it, it was to me the most pleasing solitude, so that I am really angry with the present fine weather. I saw, on my arrival the two Grignans and Mons. de la Garde; so I leave you to guess the subject of our conversation. I went in the morning to see Mademoiselle de Meri, and found her somewhat better. I have seen du Chêne, when, I do not know how, I happened to mention your illness. He loves you, and I find he is more affected by it, as well as more intent than the rest of them. He was quite thunderstruck to hear of those swellings in your legs, with those tremblings and inquietudes which give you so much pain: he would have you to rub the small of your back, with a mixture of brandy and walnut oil extracted, by expressing without fire; he says, this will open the pores in the parts from whence those
serosities

ferosities proceed, and that you will find a great relief from it. He commends you for leaving off your old milk; he advises you, instead of milk, which does not agree with you, to take largely of barley-water, and chicken-broth, in which there has been put a quantity of cooling seeds; and that if you do not correct the ill qualities of that blood of yours, you may come to repent it. He begs of you, in the most earnest manner, not to neglect taking the water de Sainte-Reine, and says you know well enough what it is. He repeated this three or four times over. Du Chêne thinks too, the coffee you take increases the circulation too much, heats it, tho' it may possibly be of service to people who ail nothing but their stomach; but that he never did prescribe it to any in your present condition, and that it is easy to form a judgment of it by your thinness, which gets ground, in proportion as you continue to use it; that it is to be feared you will not be sensible of its evil tendency, till it is too late; and that the strength you think coffee gives you, is only an imaginary good; as it is owing to nothing but the too quick circulation of your blood, which, on the contrary, rather wants to be calmed and sweetened. I would have you think of it, my dear girl, I only repeat what du Chêne told me with abundance of concern and regard for you. Possibly you may think so long an article tiresome; but how could I help it! Put yourself in my place, and then guess what my fears and my feelings are. You love du Chêne, this is his advice, and what he obliged me to promise I would let you know.

You are now, I see, at Lambesc, my dear girl, tho' a more honourable cause invited you farther in Provence. I am extremely apprehensive for you, by reason of those tiresome compliments and visits you must receive; you are by no means in a situation to cope with all this. There is no talk of the King's journey into the province, any more than about the blue ribbons. The King is absolutely resolved to grant none to any, on account of the multitude of pretenders. What I tell you, I have from two different hands, and those pretty sure ones. Now I must tell you, Madame de la Rochefoucault, and Madame de la Fayette send you a

thousand compliments; Mesdames de Lavardin and de Mouri, send you to the full as many. I have not as yet seen the Marchinefs d'Huxelles. The Chevalier is to write you the news. I imagine the Marſhal de Bellefond will hardly ever get the better of the many ails he labours under. You are perfectly ſatisfied with the obliging diſpoſitions of the Mademoiſelles de Grignan, and it is a great happineſs for you. But, daughter, pray where learnt you, that you was a dragon? how can you delight to uſe theſe kind of expreſſions? Did not you agree with me in every particular, with regard to what I wanted to do? Pray did not you paſs the winter on occaſion at Britainy, when your affairs required you to ſpend the ſummer at Livri? Did you make any more difficulty than another body, in moping away your time at your eaſe? I conjure you, not ſo much as to form a wiſh to be in any other ſituation than the preſent, except for your health's ſake only. But who could ever have imagined you could have grown ſo delicate and thin in ſo ſhort a time? Pray, what have you done with Paulina? I could wiſh from my ſoul you had brought her with you. I made Madame de Vins read her letter, who was charmed with it, as well as her uncles: I aſſure you it is a maſter-piece of eaſe and elegant ſimplicity.

Madame de la Sabliere has certainly taken the reſolution you approve of, *let us break off the ſad remains*. Madame de Coulanges, what think you I would now ſay? why truly I think as you do. But Madame de Coulanges will have it, that la Fare was never in love at all, it was nothing but mere lazineſs, mere lazineſs, mere lazineſs; and la Vaſette has given proof, that all he wanted at Madame de Sabliere's, was only to ſee good company. A-pro-pos, Madame de Villas has written to no one ſoul on her arrival at Madrid, but only to Madame de Coulanges *. In this letter ſhe has her

* Madame de Villas wrote ſeveral letters to Madame de Coulanges, during her laſt ſtay at Madrid. Such of them as have been preſerved, amounting to thirty-ſeven, begin 2 November, 1679, and end 15 May, 1681. They are not only very amuſing, but extremely curious; both in regard to the anecdotes relating to the marriage

her compliments to all our other old friends: such as Madame de Schomberg, Mademoiselle de l'Estrange, Madame de la Fayette, all in one packet. Madame de Villars says, it is enough to be in Spain, to be cured of the desire of building castles here. You see she judged well in the person she addresses her letter for, as she intended writing such pretty things. The Queen of Spain has said a thousand tender things to Madame de Saint Chaumont, as she passed. The Lady of the Marshal de Clerembault *, has not once opened her mouth since. We expect news both of the marriage and interview †. They say the Princess d'Harcourt and the Marshal's lady return forthwith, and that Madame de Grancei ‡ goes all the way to Madrid. I told Brancas you complimented him on his mourning weeds, and not on her affliction. There has been many people drowned in the Chevalier de Tourville's ship, who saved his life by swimming; I fancy one of our Chevaliers de Sévigné is lost among the rest. My son is in Lower Britany, I have a notion his love sits pretty easy on him. Adieu, my dearest, would to God you enjoyed as good a state of health as I do! I conjure you to write me but two or three words, in relation to your health, and your friendship for me; let us amuse ourselves in the best manner we can, I most willingly sacrifice the pleasure of reading your amiable letters to the satisfaction of finding you do not exhaust yourself in writing them.

Monf. de Corbinelli continues.

It is then your pleasure, Madame, I should tell you the regard I always have borne for you, and which I shall always bear you, as well on your own account, Madame, and your deservings, which are infinite, as out of regard to your mother, whom I adore, as I know you do.

marriage of Charles II. of England with Madame Louisa d'Orleans, and the picture which Madame de Villars draws of the nature of the country, and of the manners and customs of the Spanish court.

* Louise-Francoise Bouthillier de Chavigni, wife of Philip de Clerembault, Marshal of France, and Lady of honour to the Queen of Spain.

† This marriage was celebrated at Burgos, 18 November.

‡ Louisa-Elizabeth Rouxel, was called Madame de Grancei, when one of the ladies about the person of the Queen of Spain.

Madame de Sévigné resumes.

This is the line he would have wrote you three weeks ago ; I promise you he merits your esteem. I have been just reading the fine passage you mentioned to us, and find it divinely beautiful, as far as a certain period, where the author creates himself so vast a difficulty, that it really appears to us, as it did to himself, unsurmountable : and that he cannot extricate himself, but in a very obscure manner ; and whereof we leave those who are more enlightened than ourselves to comprehend the meaning.

L E T T E R CCCCLXVIII.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday, 10 November, 1679.

I AM no longer a shepherdess, my poor girl, I have left with regret my solitary conversation with your letters, and your dear idea, supported by Louison, our cows and sheep, and a certain state between hawk and buzzard, that I put up with well enough, because I would neither spare nor flatter myself. I am now in the refinements of the hotel de Carnavalette, where I don't find I am a whit the less taken up with you, that your letters are less dear to me, or that any thing in the universe is capable to divert me from having you always in my thoughts. I shall not be able to send you any news, I know scarce any at present ; but what I do send you, are at first hand, and come from a good quarter, they may be depended upon. You assure me, my dearest, you are perfectly well. God grant it be so, and so I have done on that article. I would not have you write me such long letters ; I am certain they do you a deal of harm. Were it not for this only consideration, you may believe I could be glad they were as long as possible ; but this apprehension damps all my satisfaction on this point. Du Chêne told me the other day, nothing could be worse for you than writing much. The time will shortly come, daughter, when you must write less, and when you come here, you must set about the care of your health, and compleating your cure.

cure. We will take care to put the hotel de Carnavalette into as good order as possible for you. The good Abbé is as much for this as I am. I wish you would never write me any bad accounts of yourself in your letters, and that you would not imagine your letters have any privilege beyond a chamber conversation: I should be unworthy of your friendship, were I capable of entertaining such a thought. I am well persuaded you love me, and I have the same alertness in comprehending your meaning, with those who are most delighted with your conversation and correspondence. Ah! did you but know the power of one word, of a look, of one kind expression from you, and from what distant countries one of these is able to fetch me, you would be convinced, my *pretty one, that to me, nothing in this life is equal to the enjoyment of your dear company! Your devotion on All-Saints day, has led you to say such things to me, as have softened me in a wonderful manner. It was really vastly well done of you, to cram all your little ones in the same litter with you. O the dear little company! Had I been of your council, I should have given my vote for doing just as you have done: you will see it by the advice I give Paulina, in the answer I give her quite in the forms. What a lovely creature it is, it is sure impossible she can ever tire! Enjoy, my dear girl, all these comforts, and far from thinking of depriving yourself of them, rather think of the numberless ills of this mortal and so transitory a life.

Monf. de la Rochefoucault, Madame de la Fayette and Langlade, spoke of Monf. de Grignan yesterday, as the person in the whole world, they wish most to serve; and that they will lose not a moment, nor let slip any opportunity to shew it effectually. They are going, as to an opera, to see Mademoiselle de Lovois's dresses; there is not a morsel of gold stuff, that stands her in less than twenty louis d'ors an ell. La Langlée has exhausted her skill in combining taste with magnificence. Monf. de Mêmes has given a prodigious character of that of Grignan, and has written in a very deserving manner of it to Monf. de la Rochefoucault.

I finish this letter at Mademoiselle de Meri's, where

I also close my packet. The poor creature is quite demolished with the vapours and evacuations, and is incapable of writing a single syllable: she tells you by me, all she would write to you were she able. I have been just visiting that poor Chevalier, who keeps his bed, with pains in his neck and leg. This rheumatic humour never leaves him; I have more compassion than other people for this disorder. I have a notion his illness will be of no long continuance; he feels the ferocities already beginning to dissipate; he wants a good pumping much, did the season permit of it. He gave me his to enclose in my packet: these poor sick bodies must be taken care of; all the rest of Paris is ill of a cold;

All died not; tho' none escaped a wound *.

As you were wont to say. Adieu, my dear girl, I embrace you with the greatest tenderness, with all your great and little company.

L E T T E R CCCCLXIX.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 22 November, 1679.

WHAT I am going to tell you, my dear child, will both surprise and vex you. Mons. de Pomponne is out of favour, he had orders on Saturday evening, as he was returning from Pomponne, to resign his office. The King has given orders he should receive seven hundred thousand livres, and that his pension of twenty thousand livres a year, which he had as minister, should be continued to him; his majesty intending by this order, to shew him, he was satisfied with his fidelity. It was Mons. Colbert who has served him this pretty turn, assuring him at the same instant, that he was extremely mortified to be obliged, &c. Mons. de Pomponne asked him, whether me might not be allowed the honour of speaking to the King and to learn

* Ils ne mourroient pas tous; mais tous étoient frappez.

A verse of la Fontaine, in his fable of Les Animaux Malades de la Peste.

from his own mouth what fault he had committed, to bring upon him this stroke; he was told, he could not, so he wrote to the King, expressing his extreme sorrow, and his utter ignorance of what might have contributed to his disgrace; he took notice of his numerous family, and besought him to have compassion on his eight children. Immediately after he caused the horses to be put into his chariot, and returned to Paris, where he arrived at twelve at night. We had been, as I wrote you, on the Friday, at Pomponne, Mons. de Chaulnes, Caumartin, and I, where we found him and the ladies, who received us with all the pleasure imaginable. We chatted all the evening, played at chess; ah, what a check-mate were they preparing for him at St. Germain's! He went thither the next morning, because a courier waited for him, so that Mons. Colbert, who thought to find him on Saturday in the evening as usual, knowing he was set out for St. Germain's, returned instantly, and had near burst his horses. For our parts, we did not leave Pomponne till after dinner, where we left the ladies. There was a necessity to acquaint you with what had happened by letter; this was brought by one of Mons. de Pomponne's valets de chambre, who arrived at nine on the Sunday at Madame de Vins's apartment; the man's precipitation and his looks, that seemed so prodigiously changed, made Madame de Vins take it for granted, he came with the account of Mons. de Pomponne's death; so that on finding he was only disgraced, she recovered; when she began to be fully sensible of her misfortune, and then went to acquaint her sister. They set out that instant, leaving all those little boys in tears; and arrived in Paris at two in the afternoon, overwhelmed with grief. You may figure to yourself this interview with Mons. de Pomponne, and what they felt on meeting each other in a situation so different from what they looked for but the evening before. As for myself, I learned this piece of news from the Abbé de Grignan, and I will confess to you, it pierced me to the heart. I went to their house in the evening, they saw no company in public, I went up stairs, and found them all three. Mons. de Pomponne embraced me, without being able to utter a word: the

ladies could not refrain bursting into tears, as I myself did. You would have wept too, my child, it was really a moving spectacle; that circumstance of our quitting each other at Pomponne, in a manner so different, augmented our sorrows. Poor Madame de Vins, whom I left so brisk, could hardly be known, a fever of a fortnight's standing could hardly have altered her more; she mentioned you to me, and said, she was persuaded you would feel for her and *Monf. de Pomponne's* affliction, which I answered in the affirmative. We spoke of the blow she felt from this disgrace, both in regard to her affairs, and the agreeable situation to herself, and her husband's fortune; I do assure you, she feels all in its greatest horror. *Monf. de Pomponne*, it is true, was not a favourite, but yet his situation was such, as gave him an opportunity to obtain certain extraordinary things, which often make one's fortune. There are many situations inferior to that of others, sufficient to make the fortunes of particular persons. It was besides a pleasing situation, to be thus in a manner settled in the court. Good God, what a change is here! what retrenching, and what œconomy, must now be made use of in this family! Eight children, and not have time to obtain the smallest favour! They are thirty thousand livres a year in debt, guess how much they have left: they are going to a miserable retreat at Paris and Pomponne. It is said so many journies, and sometimes the attendance of couriers, even that of Bavaria, who arrived on the Friday, and whom the King waited for with impatience, have contributed something to draw this misfortune upon them. But you will easily comprehend in this the ways of providence, when I tell you, it is the president Colbert who has his place; as he is in Bavaria, his brother officiates in his absence, and writes to him with an air of joy, and with a view to surprise him, as if by mistake, on the back of his letter; To *Monf. Colbert*, Minister and Secretary of State. I paid my compliments of condolence to the unfortunate family. Only reflect a little on the mighty power of this family, as well at home as abroad, and you will easily perceive, it far exceeds that of the house

house into which they are now about to marry *. My poor girl, here's a very circumstantial account of things; but I imagined, that on such occasions, one cannot be too particular; I take it you are pleased one should always be talking with you, in which I have perhaps complied with your desires but too far. When your courier arrives, I shall have nothing to present him with, and it is an additional chagrin to me, to find I must from henceforwards be entirely useless to you: tho' it is true, I was already so by the means of Madame de Vins, but that was meant in pure jest. In a word, daughter, all is now at an end, and such is the way of the world. Mons. de Pomponne is better qualified than any man upon earth to support this misfortune with courage, and a truly christian resignation. Yet those people, who like him, have enjoyed the smiles of fortune, are wont to be pitied in their misfortunes.

I must, however, yet beg leave to add a word or two, in relation to your short letter, it gave me a sensible consolation; you let me know the little boy is quite recovered, and at the same time give me to understand, I should be full as well satisfied in regard to yourself were I to say you. Ah, my dear, doubt it not, what a delightful prospect were it, to think you really begin to take care of your health, by taking the necessary repose to recruit your decayed strength! but it is a prospect you have never yet afforded me. You see this care has by no means been fruitless, you already discover the salutary effects of it; and if I plague myself hereby some endeavours to inspire you with the same attention to your welfare, you plainly see, I do it with a abundance of reason.

* Madeleine-Charlotte le Tellier, daughter to Mons. de Louvois, married the day after, being 23 November, Francis Duke of Rochefoucault, and of Rocheguion, grandson to Mons. de la Rochefoucault.

L E T T E R CCCCLXX.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday, 24, November, 1679.

GOOD God! what a charming letter have I just now received from you! what delightful reading! and what pleasure it is, to hear you discourse on all the points you treat of! that about physic transports me. I am persuaded, that with that understanding, and quickness of apprehension with which God has endowed you, you might, with a little application, soon outstrip the very doctors themselves: you might indeed stand in need of a little experience, and perhaps too you might not kill with impunity as they do; but yet I would much sooner trust your judgment than theirs, in judging of a disease. The only real concern of life, is undoubtedly that of the care of ones health; the world seems to agree in this; the general question is, how do ye do? how do ye do? and yet we are commonly absolutely ignorant of every particular relating to this most necessary science. Learn then, learn, daughter, continue to finish the course of your studies; the scarlet gown is all the diploma you will stand in need of, as the play says*. Pray, what do you mean, by sending us your pretty little doctor? I do assure you, they have entirely lost their credit here, except it be three or four of our acquaintance, and who prescribe the Englishman's recipe, all the rest are in the utmost detestation. This very Englishman has, but the other day, recovered Marshal Bellefond from death's door. I do not think the first physician has the right secret. Can it then be true, daughter, you have got the better of your complaints? no longer any pains in the stomach, no cholic, no pain in the legs. How happy a thing it is, you see the advantage of repose, and taking care to recruit yourself. Can you be angry with me for chiding you, when you neglect yourself, and inhumanly abandon all care of your poor person. I could speak ten years about this wicked conduct in you, and the good you see attending a contrary conduct. Why cannot I embrace

* Moliere's *Malade imaginaire*.

you,

you, and enjoy your company here on the evenings? I enter this house with an heavy heart; from nine till twelve at night, I have no more company than I had at Livri; and yet I prefer this repose and silence, to all the evening parties I am offered in this part of the town: I cannot endure rambling abroad of an evening; I find, when I am not tormented with my fears for your welfare, I feel your absence prodigiously. That breast of yours often causes me to forget the loss of your company, but the first complaint often returns upon me, except when I am curbed by the other. I will confess to you I never put up with it so easily, as when I am in some apprehension for your welfare. Madame de Vins stands in need of some equally powerful medicine, to remove her affliction on occasion of Mons. de Pomponne's disgrace, by which she loses her all: I visit her often, and no misfortune shall ever drive me from that house. Mons. de Pomponne will easily resolve on what is best to be done, and will bear this piece of ill fortune with dignity; he is going to display all those virtues of a private station, we so much admired in him at Frene. They say he was rather remiss in his office, and made the couriers wait too long for their dispatches: he justifies himself as well as could be wished; but, good God, do we not plainly see where the fault lies? Ah, how would Madame du Pleffis have adored him in the present conjuncture? and how would this similitude of situations have cemented their union? Nothing in the world would have been so happy for him; I took notice of it too, to Madame de Vins, I suppose you take my meaning. I can answer for the justness of my notion, which is, I dare say, your own. The whole court pities him, and have been to pay him their compliments of condolence on the occasion. You will soon see him recommence, if I may be allowed the expression, the thread of his perfections. We talked a great deal about providence, a doctrine he understands perfectly well. Surely never was there so worthy a minister. Mons. Colbert, the Ambassador *, is to

* Mons. de Colbert de Croissy, brother to the Comptroller General, was then in Bavaria, in order to conclude a marriage between Monseigneur and Maria Anna Victoria of Bavaria.

succeed in this fine office ; he is a great friend of the Chevalier's. Write the latter all your thoughts, perhaps fortune, capricious as she is, intends you should reap more satisfaction by his means than by our intimate acquaintance. You will readily enough strike into the right road, by what I tell you. How is it possible for us to know, what providence has in store for us.

I continue my care of Mademoiselle de Meri ; the impression the misfortune of her little domestic makes on her, is really very extraordinary. She tells me, she fancies when any one speaks to her, they are shooting at her as if they had a mind to kill her ; this really does her as much harm as her illness : it is a mere circle ; her anger increases her disorder, and her disorder augments her anger. The sum of it is that it is a very strange affair, and I employ all my attention to administer to her relief.

Corbinelli gives up the Chevalier de Méré, with his silly style, and the ridiculous critique he makes on a wit so charmingly free and humorous, as is that of Voiture ; those are to be pitied who do not understand him *. I would not have you depend on the definition you asked of him so soon, for he has read nothing these three months but the Code and Cujes. He is charmed with you, for resolving to study physic ; you are an eternal prodigy with him. What is truly a prodigy, is the calm ingratitude of Monsi. and Madame de R***, you spoke of it in a manner diverting enough. Monsi. de Grand, and others, said in good earnest the other day at Saint Germain's that Monsi. R*** had made an admirable siege ; it was believed he had been reading some book about the great R***'s in the civil wars. Quite the contrary, it was a siege of tapestry, that hangs in his wife's apartment. Madame de Coulanges has been at court this fortnight ; Madame de Maintenon has got a cold, and would not part with her. I must tell you a quarrel she had with the Countess de

* The French editors observe justly enough, that as much may be said in regard to those, who cannot find out the value of these Letters of Madame de Sévigné.

Grammont*: this latter had scorched her fine complexion by making chocolate; Madame de Coulanges would have hindered her from taking that trouble: the Countess bid her let her alone, for it was all the pleasure she had left. Madame Coulanges answered, Ah, ingrate! This expression, which at any other time would have made her burst with laughing, embarrassed and disconcerted her to such a degree, that she could never get the better of it, and they have never taken notice of one another since. The Abbé Tetu said in a very rude manner, to our neighbour, "But, Madame, had she answered you, the pot calls the kettle black a——, what would you have said?" Sir, said she, tho' I am no kettle, yet she is a pot. So here is another outfall. Quanto and the sick lady are both very ill; this latter is perfectly in favour with the fountain of all good things, which occasions a world of ill blood. I could tell you a thousand bagatelles, were you here. Ah, dear daughter, how can you tell me I have nothing to do, but laugh at my ease, whilst I have your absence to support; I could almost find in my heart to say, Ah, ingrate! Do not you remember what this absence of yours has made me suffer? are not you the most sensible and real occupation of my heart? You well know, and you deserve to feel, what a terrible addition the fear of hearing you are indisposed, and chilled by that subtle air of Grignan, makes to this apprehension. You must do me a real and great injustice, were you in the least at a loss to guess my sentiments, so very natural, and so full of the most tender regard for you.

Langlade has been to visit me this morning, and imparted to me in a very obliging manner, the honour he is to have next Sunday, of being presented and represented to the King by Mons. de Louvois: this is still a secret; here are very pleasing advances, and which our good d'Hacqueville knew nothing of; he left you to be informed of it at your leisure by the Gazette. Langlade begged me to let you know so much from him, and that he wishes for happiness only, that he may

* Elizabeth Hamilton, Lady of the bed-chamber to Queen Marie Theresé of Austria.

have it in his power to serve you and Monf. de Grignan; joking apart, it would give him infinite pleasure, could he see any prospect, or contribute by any possible means to do you a pleasure. He was the person who made the marriage, which was celebrated yesterday with so much magnificence at Monf. de Louvois's *. He had brought back the spring, nothing was to be seen but orange-trees in full blossom, and all sorts of flowers. Yet for all this, the scale that inclined so much the other way, mingled in every thing a kind of melancholy sadness, that in some degree damped that joy which had otherwise been too excessive. Do not you admire this jumble of all things in this world of ours? How far every enjoyment is from being pure and unmixed, and how short a while they remain in the same situation. I imagine you have no difficulty in comprehending my meaning; it would require a long winter's night, to talk over one half the present revolutions. Adieu, my dear pretty one. I could rather wish Madame de Cauvillon would communicate her good fortune to you, than that head of hers. That of my son, is at present in Lower Britany; I know not whether one part of him be with Mademoiselle de la Côte; but I am as much persuaded as you are, there is little danger of what we once apprehended. I expect to hear from him on his arrival at Nantes. The *Worthy* has got a bad cold, and so has all the world besides myself. I shall cause myself to be blooded this Lent, you have shewn me very well the necessity of it. The little gentleman will never get the better of his cold, but by drinking asses milk; it is common for the measles to be attended with a weakness in the breast, and this is the very reason I was so terribly apprehensive on your account. The Chevalier is as good as cured. La Garde does not set out till he has *turned* his affairs: but then, when he is in a condition to depart, no earthly consideration, he says, shall hinder him. I embrace you, my dearest girl, and wish for nothing so much, as the pleasure of embracing you in person.

* See the preceding letter.

L E T T E R CCCCLXXI.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 29, November, 1679.

YOU will discourse long enough on the subject of Monf. Pomponne's misfortune, before we find you as you used to be: this disgrace is yet fresh in our thoughts. A minister of his temper, his easiness and good humour, is so rare to be met with, that we ought to be allowed to feel such a loss for a while longer. You are in the right in guessing, I go there pretty frequently; I could not help being moved to see him enter the other day with that amiable air, not in the least sad nor dejected. Madame de Coulanges begged I would carry her there; he thanked her for having had the goodness to remember an unfortunate man; he presently changed the discourse to some more entertaining subject of conversation, which he enlivened, and made as agreeable as usual to him, without, however, the least affectation of gaiety, and in so noble and unaffected a manner, and so blended with whatever was capable to excite our admiration, that he had no great difficulty in succeeding. In short, we shall shortly see Monf. de Pomponne as much himself as ever we knew him: this first visit we could not help being moved; he had no sort of business to employ him, and began to relish life, and to be sensible of the real length of the days; for in the manner he had hitherto been employed, his life ran away like a torrent, which he had no power to stop. We told him so, the last time we saw him at Pomponne a minister of state: you know it was that very evening he was disgraced and removed from his office. I had a long discourse with Madame de Vins yesterday; she will be much longer in forgetting this disaster, than Monf. de Pomponne will; I am so naturally concerned for them, that I am obliged to put some restraint upon myself, lest what is real should have an air of affectation and feigned generosity; I am greatly in favour with them. In short, Monf. de Pomponne is now no more than the worthiest man alive:
do

do you remember the passage in Voiture, where, speaking of Monsieur the Prince, he says,

Not in so high a rank he stood,
He was no more than Prince o' th' blood *.

This is exactly his case. There are, however, some strokes pleasant enough in this disgrace. I happened to say, this put me in mind of Soyecour, *pray who speaks to you?* You understand all I say, and all I do not say. In short, there is no help for it, we must have recourse to providence, whose adorer and disciple Mons. de Pomponne is: and pray what would life be worth without this divine doctrine? one must hang one-self twenty times a day; and even with all this, one has enough to do to keep oneself from this fatal expedient. Whilst I wait the receipt of your letters, my dearest, I could not help entering into a little chat with you, on a subject which I am well assured much affects you. Madame da Desdiguieres has written to mother Angelique of Portroyal †, this minister's sister: she shewed me the answer she received from her; I found it so pretty, I could not help copying it, which I send you. It is the first time I ever found a nun, speak and think like a nun. I have seen numbers of them in a great flutter about the marriage of relations, mad that their nieces were not yet married, vindictive back-biters, interested, full of prejudices; such as these are easily met with; yet never saw I one truly and sincerely dead to this world. I wish you therefore, daughter, to enjoy so great a rarity to the full as I have. She was the beloved daughter of Mons. d'Andilli, of whom he told me, *I do assure you, all my brothers and sisters, all my children and myself into the bargain, are mere dunces to Angelica.* There never came any thing good out of that country, which had not first been corrected by her, and received her approbation: she is mistress of all the lan-

* The original lines are,

Il n'avoit, pas un si haut rang,
Il n'etoit que prince du sang.

† Mother Anglique de Saint Jean Arnaud, Abbess of Nôtre Dame de Portroyal des Champs, died 29 January, 1684, aged 59 years.

guages, and every science : in short, she is a miracle, and the more so, as she embraced the state of celibacy at six years of age. I refused Brancas a copy of her letter : he is unworthy of it, and I told him so ; only own to me, that this is not so badly written neither for a *heretic*. I have seen many others besides of her hand, and even much finer and juster than this : this is no more than a biller written in a cursory manner. My own is written rather on the gallop.

I was at this wedding of Madame de Louvois ; how shall I describe it to you ? Magnificence, illuminations, over all France, gold and silver tissues, brocades, diamonds, stoves, flower-pots, crowds of coaches, huzzas in the streets, lighted flambeaux, kicking of horses, and people trod to death ; in short, a whirlwind, confusion, questions asked without any answer, compliments without knowing what one said, or to whom, and legs entangled in ladies trains : and, amidst all this hurly-burly, enquiries about your health ; to which, as I made no haste to answer, the enquirers were satisfied to remain in the same ignorance and indifference. *Vanity of vanities !* The young and handsome de Mouchi has got the small-pox ? one might here too repeat vanity, &c.

I received your letter of the 18th, it was on a Saturday, and the very day the disgrace of that poor gentleman happened ; every word you have been telling me of him, pierces me to the heart ; when I think of this downfall, and how far you were from suspecting any thing of the matter, I am in pain for the consequence of the surprize. As there is now room to use any precaution with Madame de Vins, I shall let her know how sensible you still are of Pomponne's obliging behaviour. Alas, you mention the marriage of the Dauphin, foreign affairs, ministers ; I fancy the last one, must think of passing the winter at Pomponne ; for tho' he says not, I am afraid he will be importuned to do it. He is full of piety ; and if this be the way to salvation, he will lose no time in hiding himself in solitude. What a misfortune for Madame de Vins ! and in how sensible a manner does she feel it ! We were seized yesterday with an apprehension, Brancas and I,
left

left living at Pomponne, he was wont to be so immeasurably fond of, and which has given rise to all the venial sins he has ever committed, should become insupportable to him by a common enough kind of caprice. This excess of time and leisure he will have there, may give him a disgust to it, and may possibly lead him to remember that this very Pomponne has contributed to his misfortune. Why may we not suppose it to be, as was the case of the Abbé d'Effiat, who, to shew his dislike to Veret, said he had married his mistress. By no means, this is downright folly, and Mons. de Pomponne is a person of prudence. You mention your de la Trappe; why, he was your rector at Saint Andiol. You must have had a deal of discourse with him: nothing can be more curious than to know from the first hand, what passes in this family. The dinner you describe to me is horrible; I cannot comprehend this piece of mortification, 'tis a mere piece of Judaism, and the most unwholesome thing in the universe. The Capuchins I saw at Pomponne, enjoin it every where: I do not know whether the poor creatures know the consequence of what they are doing, but it is in their opinion the most wholesome thing in nature; they tell you, a small quantity of the spirit of salt in every thing one takes, will entirely remove all nephritic complaints. I fancy Villebrune * must have experienced the virtue of this present of heaven. In short, I am far from being edified by this filthy kind of penance. You take care always to speak in so favourable a way of the extraordinary care you take of your health, that I am utterly at a loss how to talk to you. May God grant you to continue in that care, of which you have already begun to feel the good effects; and had you but made use of a little of it when you were here, you would considerably have abridged our discourse on this subject. What you tell me of Madame de Coulanges, and her being angry with la Fare, to whom she made as if she would have told him he had imposed upon her, would be an admirable thing to shew her, at the same time we

* An Ex-Capuchin that dabbled in physic. See letter 15 December, 1675.

signify to her your great desire to hear from her, had you not too freely opened your sentiments to her, in relation to Madame de Villars's regard for her. This circumstance obliges me to conceal the other affair from her, which would have rejoiced her exceedingly. I beg you would once more resume your discourse about her, for she is for ever pressing me to make her compliments to you in the most earnest manner. She will needs see the passages where you speak of your health, she interests herself in it, as well as in what concerns her little friend; all this kindness must be repaid. I do not know how you will like to hear that la Trouffe is not yet come back; I am either greatly deceived in him, or else he must have been guilty of some most abominable trespass against the received notions of love and friendship. Good God, what follies do not we see in this world of ours!

I do not think I wept on seeing that courier charged with dispatches to Mons. de Pomponne. I met the other day some waggons loaden with his furniture, which they were bringing from Saint Germain's; this created a new emotion within me: in short, my dear, you may easily guess the difficulty I met with, in reconciling myself to this revolution. I am not in love with losing my letters; yours are dear to me beyond every thing. You should not be so anxious about mine, for I can assure you, I never enjoyed better health in my whole life: I shall take physic shortly, by way of preparative for the taking of the water you know of, out of mere obedience and regard to you. You make Corbinelli a very just compliment, it is impossible to return him his own better than to his own words. He will have work enough to comment upon that small task you have made; and if chance so order it, as that this ever come upon the carpet again, he is persuaded you will entirely erase it. Be it as it will, we are now pretty sure of the time to come, both in regard to the loss we have sustained, and to that link of your union which is so agreeable to you both; and who know better than any body the justice you do him, in restoring him to that place in your friendship he formerly enjoyed.

joyed. It would be of no small profit to you, that you knew all the good we say of you together.

Farewel, dearest and loveliest creature, may the Almighty have you continually in his protection; what a miracle it is, you have not had those abominable measles! it is a dreadful disease for the breast; your son must take milk. Madame de Mêmes is arrived. I run thither yesterday; she tells me wonders of you, your husband, your children, your castle, your good cheer, your music, your fine air, and in some sort of your welfare; but it was all because she knew it would please me. Take care you do not send me answers as long as my letters: consider, my dear, that I hold no earthly correspondence but with yourself alone. My son is in Lower Britany at Tonquedec's, and is coming home. I embrace all my good friends about you; and Paulina, Madame de Mêmes tells me, is extremely pretty. Monf. de Mêmes is not yet arrived.

LETTER CCCCLXXII.

To the same.

Paris, Friday, 1 December, 1679.

YES, my dear, I do make you a present of that pretty writing-desk; it has always been my intention. I only waited for your approbation, to let you know I gave it you. The Abbé swears, he was always of the same opinion, so that if he has put it down by mistake, in the little bill of disbursements he sent you, he begs you would entirely blot it out. It will henceforth be mamma's desk, and is a pretty thing enough to give me the ambition of its being so called; and the more so, as you tell me you will never make a dagger of it.

I do not like you should be angry with yourself, for having acquainted me with your son's illness; pray, for heaven's sake, how was it possible to conceal a thing of this kind? I should hate this excessive dissimulation, nay, the very pen would drop from my hand; and then, I beseech you, what should one talk of, if not in relation to what we are most anxious about, and anxious to

to such a degree as this ? For my own part, I know myself incapable of it, and I honour freedom in communicating one's sentiments to such a degree, that it would never enter into my head, to be tender in giving such a piece of inquietude to a person I loved, at the expence of the consolation I should reap at imparting what gave me pain. This is my way of thinking, this is *my mamma's* humour, and I entreat you, to let it be *my daughter's* humour likewise, and that you would never give yourself the smallest trouble about the pain you have caused me, since you have equally made me share in what gave you pleasure : is not this the proper effect of friendship ? Ah, so indeed it is, and I know of no other fruit of this amiable commerce.

Monf. and Madame de Pomponne, and Madame de Vins, are gone to Pomponne ; my God ! how I fear the sight of that place will affect them ; there will they all at once behold six boys, and that house, where they will henceforth have but too much leisure to pass their time : I cannot help thinking the sight of all this must occasion them very melancholy reflections. I have sent away your letters, and you did extremely well to write them. The little woman is at the hotel de Rochefoucault, as gay and as pert as ever. If she is not polished a little by the company of so many excellent polishers of both sexes, I shall conclude education to be no more than one of la Fontaine's fables.

What say you to the opportunity of an handsome apartment in this street, which Mademoiselle de Meri is likely to let slip through her fingers from mere want of resolution ? Monf. de la Trouffe, who is just arrived, and the Chevalier, have both seen it, and are perfectly taken with it. She wants a wardrobe, which I promise she shall have ; another room for a servant, which I also undertake shall not be wanting ; tho' I think she ought to begin by taking possession : she wanted to be in this part of the town, here is a fair opportunity ; she was desirous to stand at a lower rent than where she formerly was, this is the very thing she wanted ; to be near a church, here's one at the door ; good air and a good opening, nothing is wanting ; except this one unlucky

lucky circumstance, that it suits too well, and has not half the difficulties and inconveniencies we ought to have. For my part, I agree with her, there is a certain pleasure in making complaints, nay, even that it is a greater pleasure than one commonly thinks for. Brancas came to take me with him to sup at Madame de Coulanges's; her supper is little, and company good, seeing here are only four: I suffer myself sometimes to make a little debauch with Brancas, without any good reason for so doing, like Madame Guitaut's woman. I am now taking the water; I have taken some pills on account of the cold. Be sure you omit no opportunity to inform me of the state of your health, for my whole thoughts are occupied with that; and all I wish for, is to see you less thin and less wasted, than when I left you. When I reflect how our lives, and especially my own, are passed away in this absence and inquietude, I pity all who are of the same tenderness of sentiment with myself. Madame de la Fayette is fully persuaded, she would have fulfilled all our friendship and demands, had she given you back to me, by an attachment suitable enough to Monsi. de Grignan: she is touched with this pleasure, and finding herself in the eye of favour, all she wishes for is a fit occasion; she is waiting in hopes of its offering, and one has a right to expect some such good fortune, from the natural inconstancy of all human things. Langlade meets her half way in this; he has paid his humble respects to the King, this is literally true, for the King said not a word to him, but only cast a pleasing glance at him. I am going to dine with the Marchioness d'Huxelles, she informs me, this Monsi. de Piles intreats my compliance; Monsi. de la Rochefoucault and Treville are to be there; this is called the select company. Madame de Lavardin is exceeding ill of a cold, and keeps her bed, with Madame de Meri at her pillow; the Marchioness and I are on either hand, but then about ten degrees lower. Adieu, my dear, preserve to me the dearest person to me in this world; you may easily guess, I speak no other than the truth. I know not a jot of news; the Chevalier will tell you some; he is never without true or false.

L E T-

L E T T E R CCCCLXXIII.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 6 December, 1679.

YOUR messenger, my dear, arrived on Saturday at three: we are always on a flurry on the receipt of news. All those packets addressed to Mons. de Pomponne, Minister and Secretary of State, are very moving to me. He is now at Pomponne, in an absolute solitude, and is as much at his leisure as we are at Livri. Mess. de Grignan and I, thought it would be civil to send him the packets addressed, that he might take out his own letters, and send back the others, which was done; at the same time the courier, (who was Rencontre,) crossed directly over to Saint Germain's, and delivered to Parere what Mons. de Pomponne sent back. In the mean time, the real courier, with the remaining letters, was conducted by the Abbé de Grignan to all the places he ought to call at: he will inform you in what manner he has been received. For my own part, I offer my service in soliciting the direction, which is all the service I can do your courier, whom we shall send back as quickly as possible. Mons. de Pomponne, and Madame de Vins, wrote to me in a very kind manner, on the subject of my having wrote them my sentiments; they tell me they must have recourse to the repose of the country in this troublesome accident, and that it will suit their present situation much better than Paris: I can easily see the reason of this notion of theirs, when I am under any uneasiness of mind, nothing will do but Livri. In fact, I shall hardly ever be able to reconcile myself to this minister's downfall, as I thought his situation much more to be depended on, than that of the other ministers, as being no favourite. They say it is upwards of two years since he began to lose ground in the King's affections, that he was headstrong in the council, that he went often to Pomponne, that this rendered him less punctual and exact in his department, and that in the last, this Bavarian courier, who arrived on Thursday in the evening, and of which he did not give any account

till Saturday at five in the afternoon, compleated his disgrace. He excuses himself for this fault, by saying it took up all this time to decypher the dispatches; and that had the courier only not shewn himself, his Majesty would have been under no uneasiness about the matter; but he had been with Monsr. Colbert, and had delivered his letters; so the news took air before the King had his letters: all this was ordered by the overruling designs of providence; Monsr. de Pomponne considers it only in this light, and it is the only consideration that can possibly alleviate, what he suffers in his present situation. Nothing happens amiss to the happy. Every thing has contributed to make Mademoiselle de Vauvineux, Princess de Guimené: *primo amor del cor mio* *, is the only reason her husband gives every body. This whole affair has been carried on with so much secrecy, that no soul dreamt of it till the Sunday morning. They had been married at midnight at St. Paul's. The King was chief confidant in this affair, he signed the contract, and having no longer the same reasons he had these two years past, had changed his mind, and approved the match. There were twenty-nine persons obliged of necessity to be privy to the affair, and who it seems could hold their tongues. The new married couple were not to be seen next day, and on Tuesday, which was yesterday, the mother and daughter set out for Rochefort to visit the grand-mother, who had sent every thing necessary on her part, and who gave them a wonderful reception. Here was no pudder about fine clothes, nor any thing of that sort. It was only a good Princess de Guimené, that is, past contradiction, the first lady in France, and will lead a very agreeable life with her man, to whom she thinks, and justly enough, she is under very great obligations. It is a strange kind of man really, and a man who has not learned like you to overcome the enemy of la Trape; one who has eat salt all his life, and who cannot live without it: three months of widowhood seemed to him three ages; thoughtfulness occasions no dissipation of spirits in him, all is sacrificed to œconomy, and his affection is founded on this immoveable basis. The whole family

* i. e. my heart's first love.

of the Luines are in a fury ; “ What, but three
“ months after our daughter’s death ! he who was
“ every day bathed in tears (you see what he wept
“ for) what ! and not mention one word to us, what
“ a scandal !” I maintained Mons. de Guemené had done
very well, as well as the ladies ; the one in having fol-
lowed a very honourable and sensible inclination ; and
the latter, in making no pother about it ; and since the
King himself was their confidant, pray what would it
have signified ? I was really greatly pleased with the
whole affair ; I could easily guess Madame de Vauvi-
naux’s joy, not only for the match, which is great be-
yond imagination ; but moreover on account of the
manner in which it has been conducted, which has
prevented a world of tea-table discourse, abundance
of disgust, and the expence of a hundred thousand
livres into the bargain, that is, in my humble con-
ception, a great deal. Am I not right then, daugh-
ter, in saying all turns out well to the fortunate ; it
is a maxim of the gospel, which you know there is no
gainfaying.

In reality, I was in much pain for your Provence af-
fairs. The handsome Abbé was obliged to introduce
your messenger, whose dispatches were received in a
very agreeable manner. The Abbé very reasonably
took notice, how desirous the states of Provence was to
give the coadjutor a place in their assembly ; but that
they refused to hear of it, till they were sure of his
Majesty’s approbation, and of his being satisfied he
could do him some essential service in that province.
Mons. Colbert heard the proposal in a very obliging
manner, said he would take occasion to mention it to
the King, and that he doubted not, &c. In short, the
handsome Abbé gave every thing an admirable turn.
Parero has promised to procure the courier the al-
lowance, that is, five hundred crowns as last year.
The Abbé has a great deal more influence in all this
than I ; so you see plainly to what a pass all the affairs
you was pleased to employ me in have come to, and
the fine use I have made of all my boasted eagerness
to serve you. I am just now exactly in the case of

the fly *; that is, perch myself on the coachman's nose, push at the wheel, buz, and play five hundred antic tricks, and then say, *What a dust I raise!* I am going to see Mess. de Grignan, I have heard what they tell me, I approve of it, and advise what has been resolved on: in short, my dear child, if you love me only on account of your interest, I am undone. I have a notion my son is undone as well as I; your letter waits for him here; he is no longer wandering in the woods at the Rocks, he is now in Lower Britany; Mons. d'Harouis expects him at Nantz, and that with no small impatience, for he has affairs here.

We read a thousand different accounts of the Queen of Spain. She is entirely delivered up to her new comfort, and has kept no more than the four French ladies, who are of the bed-chamber. The King surprised her as she was putting on her head-dress, he opened the door with his own hands: she would have fallen down on her knees and kissed his hand; he prevented her, and kissed hers, so that both were on their knees. They were married without any ceremony, and then retired to discourse together. The Queen understands Spanish, she was dressed in the Spanish mode. They arrived in Burgos, lay till eight in the morning, and next morning till ten. The Queen writes to *Monseigneur* † from thence, and lets him know she is happy and satisfied; that she found the King a much more amiable person than he had been represented to her. The King is much taken with her; the Queen has been excellently well advised, and has behaved to admiration in the whole affair; guess by whom she was advised; by Madame de Grancei, no doubt on't. For as to the Marshal de Clerambault's lady, she was motionless, having added a large dose of the Spanish gravity to her Stoic philosophy. Madame de Grancei is she who has made herself the most useful personage; and accordingly has received excessive praises, and very valuable presents. The King grants her a pension of six thousand livres, which she will receive from the city of Brussels; she

* See la Fontaine's fable of the fly and the coach.

† None of the remaining part of this letter has ever been in any of the former editions.

has had a present of ten thousand crowns for a piece of intelligence which Los Balbarez gave her, and jewels to the amount of ten thousand crowns. She writes, that the soul of Madame de Fiennes has transmigrated into her; that she is for ever receiving from all quarters, and that she will grow so much accustomed to this, that she will be apt to be out of conceit with France, if she is not treated in the same manner as she has been in Spain. All the ladies are returning from thence, they have saved the Marshal's lady the trouble of one part of the journey, by requiring her absolutely to stop at Poitiers, from whence she was called. Here's as mortifying a circumstance as could possibly have happened to her; and she stands in great need of her contempt of mankind, to be able to support this disgrace. Madame d'Effiat * is she who has been declared governess, she is sent back with her husband. Write then, my dear Count, she is your friend, you are under a sort of obligation to compliment her on this occasion. The little la Mouchi has never yet had the small pox, it was the purples Sanguin cured her of. I am afraid the civilities you will be obliged to pay at Aix, will fatigue you. Go and take a little repose in your closet, solitude is now and then very necessary for you: the Mesdemoiselles de Grignan will do the honours for you. Paulina has writ me a charming letter. I am much taken with her style: it had such an effect as to cause Madame de la Fayette to forget a fit of the vapours, which had almost suffocated her. Pray, how do you manage Roquesante, with all your ladies who are my acquaintances? I am perfectly happy with your *absolutely beseeching* me to give you that writing-desk; I do not know these two words were ever put together before; really, daughter, you have given me infinite satisfaction to ask it in so peremptory a manner; I shall not tell you now, whether it is my intention to give it you or no. But should I desire not to part with it, I must even exceed your terms to effect it. I had therefore better do it at once with a good grace.

* Marie-Anne Olivier de Leuville, Marchioness d'Effiat, was declared governess to the children of Monsieur, on the dismissal of the Lady of Marshal Clerambault.

LETTER CCCCLXXIV.

To the same.

Paris, Friday, 8 December, 1679.

IT is really something so severe to be a great way off those we love, that it is impossible, let us form what resolution we will, not to be alarmed in some measure, at the irregularity of the posts. I had no letter from you on Wednesday; as for the Sunday, I was under no sort of uneasiness, as I had the courier. I sent to Messieurs de Grignan, who had received no letters any more than I had. I went there next day, which was yesterday; at last there came a letter from the Archbishop, which convinced me you was not more indisposed than is usual with you. I went to the post-office, to learn what news I could from Aix, as these gentlemen's correspondence is rather more extensive than ours; but it was of Madame Rouillé I learned that her husband *, in his letter of the 29th, made no mention of you; but a great deal about Mons. de Pomponne's disgrace, which Mons. de Grignan had acquainted him with. I expect therefore your letters of Sunday; I fancy I shall receive two. I never doubted your writing to me, unless you happened to be ill: this thought alone, tho' without any kind of grounds, is the cause of a deal of uneasiness, as it is a consequence of your weak state of health; for when you was well, I could not bear, without these horrors, the extravagant irregularities of the post: in short, what folly is it, to bring my Lady Intendant's packet from Aix, and leave mine behind: I wrote you on Wednesday a long letter, should they lose it for you, you will not understand a word of this. For instance, when I say the young Princess de Guemené will be in great state at the hotel de Guemené, you will not be able to tell what this means; but supposing you knew of Mademoiselle de Vauvineux's marriage, I would tell you, that in order nothing shall be wanting to compleat her triumph, she will receive visits there for four days running. I shall go to-morrow with Madame de Coulanges, for I make

* Intendant of Provence.

all, what I call visits, either with her or her sister. We were yesterday, Count, with your friends de Leuville, and d'Effiat; they are to receive the compliments on the reconciliation and the governorship *. This d'Effiat was ill of a cold, could not be seen, but it was all one, for young Leuville did the honours. I made your compliments to them by anticipation, and yours too, my dear daughter. One has good reason to be surprised to see Madame d'Effiat made governess to any thing; all is exceeding well, the Lady of Marshal de Clerambault will receive her packet at Poitiers, that is to say, on the same spot where she received orders to come to the Palais Royal; this is the way of the world. Pray did not I acquaint you with Madame de Grancei's good fortune, and of her being returned loaded with presents? She would set all Spain on fire, had she staid the winter, as they said she was to do. She has wrote, that the getting spirit of Madame de Fiennes, had happily transmigrated into her body, and that she was receiving favours at all hands. They expect with impatience at court the Bavarian courier, and are counting the moments. This brings to my memory the other courier, who has compleated the measure of ill offices done our poor friend; had it not been for this last adventure, he had been once more restored to his office: but the divine providence has otherwise ordered it. I acquainted you, I had sent all the large packets to Pomponne, with that of Madame de Vins: what was for Saint Germain's has been sent there. I have a great desire to know how the poor little Adhemar does. I am going to try to pluck up courage enough to write to him; if once I begin to postpone, there is no end of procrastination. What can I say more to you? I do not find there are any news; it will be known who the officers of the Dauphiness are to be on the return of the courier. I dread the effect of that tempest at Aix for your health, it is really terrible, I can well remember it. All these goings and comings, that were nothing to you formerly, are now become the most tiresome affairs. The Chevalier de Buons is here. He is always telling me you are in perfect health, that you are hand-

* See the letter 6 December, p. 337.

somer than ever, and then so gay ! This is too much Chevalier ; a little less exaggeration, with a greater share of probability ; a few more particulars, more attention, would have given much more satisfaction ; there are some eyes that let nothing escape them ; and as for those who see nothing, I am quite out of patience with them. I have often said, one is always in perfect health with those who are absolutely indifferent whether it is so or not. Saint Laurent tells me too, you are in perfect health ; good God ! one line from Montgobert, who both sees and understands, would give me an hundred times more satisfaction than all these perfect health folks. Madame de Coulanges talked with Fagon above an hour the other day at Madame de Maintenon's, they mentioned you ; Fagon says, your greatest attention must be with regard to your diet ; that a proper regimen was your cure ; that this was his only dependence ; that it sweetens the blood, repaired what was lost by dissipation, refreshed the breast, and restored one's lost strength ; and that it was a great mistake, to fancy the cause of uneasiness six or eight hours after meals to be an indigestion ; that it was in fact nothing more than a flatulency which commonly succeeds, and that were we to take a little pottage, or any thing hot above what we call our dinner, we should not feel the least inconvenience, but on the contrary much good from it ; that one of your greatest mistakes consisted in this particular of your diet. Madame de Coulanges listened to, and remembered this long lecture, and would needs have it writ to you ; I took this employ on myself, that I might at the same time beseech you, in the most earnest manner to consider well of it, and to make the experiment whether the observation be true, and so hold the preservation of your health, as the only business worthy your care, before all human considerations. Had not poor Madame de la Fayette taken this course, she had been in her grave long since ; in short, it is entirely owing to this thought, which providence put into her head, she has been able to prolong her wearisome life ; for, to tell you truth, she labours under a complication of disorders.

I this

I this moment received your packet of the 29th, by a round-a-bout conveyance, so that all the beginning of my letters is both ridiculous, and of no manner of signification. This then is that dear dear packet; you did extremely well in disguising the affair, and to let your grief subside a little. I do not the least wonder at your surprise, any more than at your grief on the occasion. What I felt at first, I feel daily. You will say a great deal to me, before I find you too full of this piece of news; it will not be so soon forgot by a great many folks whom we both know; for as to the torrent, it hurries down headlong, like that Durance of yours, when the devil possesses him; but then it does not like him, sweep all away with him. Your reflections are so tender, just, wise and good, that they deserve the esteem of somebody, whose favourable opinion is of more value than mine. You are in the right of it, the last fault has by no means been the sole occasion of the disaster, tho' it has, I believe, occasioned their taking the resolution they had no thoughts of till then. A certain person had, for a year past, made strong efforts in hopes of making all up: but some folks beat the bush, whilst others catch the birds; so that it has been no small affliction, and has intirely disturbed the internal joy of the feast*, do you take my meaning? This is then no more than a checkmate given, when one thought one had the best game imaginable, and was about to gather all the pieces. It is therefore true that this is the last drop of water the glass had to spill; what makes us turn away our porter, when he neglects to give us some billet we expect with impatience, has made some folks tumble headlong from the pinnacle of their greatness; a good use has been made of the occasion. Nobody thinks any soul called Arnaud, has had the smallest share in it. He too, perhaps, may have come in for his share. A certain gentleman told me the other day, that his subscribing his name to any thing, is looked upon as a crime; I answered in the affirmative: and that it was become a crime in them, both to subscribe and to omit doing it. I have not heard a word of that insolent paper you mention. I fancy they do

* See letters 24 and 29 November, p. 324, 329.

not commonly distrust the discretion of those, with whom they intrust their secrets; nothing can go beyond their prudence, virtue, courage, or resignation. I have a notion Mons. de Pomponne, before he quits that retirement; where he will remain some days longer, will communicate all his perfections to his whole family. I have taken care to have your packet delivered to his sister-in-law *, by sending them all, as I already acquainted you. I am going to send these I have just now received after them. Adieu, my dearest creature. You are too good to take any notice of the pain I suffer, in finding myself so little able to be of service to you; every attempt I make of this sort, but gives me new matter of mortification; yet for all this, you will not cease to love me, you assure me you will not, and I can easily believe you. I should think exactly as you do, were I in your place; this is the surest way of judging of any.

L E T T E R CCCCLXXV.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 13 December, 1679.

SAY what you will, my dearest, you must have seen by the whole tenor of my letters, how naturally I speak of this subject, and how difficult a thing it would be in me to keep silence, as I often think of it; and that if I am one degree lower in the warmth of my friendship for the sister-in-law than you, I am as much higher with regard to the brother. The old dates on our letter, or long correspondence, our connections, discover to me on the present occasion, that I have a greater attachment than I believed I had. They are still in the country; I send you inclosed the two billets they sent me, when they returned the packets. You see their present situation: can any thing exceed the tenderness or the justness of their sentiments? My esteem and friendship for them have become great, in proportion to their misfortunes; I am persuaded our misfortune has had its share in accomplishing their disgrace. Cast your eyes around all our friends, and you

* Madame de Vins.

will see your reflections justified. A great deal more might be said on the subject. I think I had already convinced you, that trifles begun to be made use of a great while since. This had formed a disposition which had been continually fomented, with a view to make advantage of it on a proper occasion; and the last fault provoked beyond all patience, and gave the finishing blow to the whole. Others immediately made use of the occasion to promote their own interest, and the whole was resolved on in a moment. This is the fact, the courier who had been expected with impatience, arrived on the Thursday in the evening; Mons. de Pomponne gave the whole dispatches to be decyphered, which was an affair of twenty-four hours. He charged the courier by no means to appear; but the courier belonging to those who had dispatched him, went and delivered his letters for the family, that is, the brother told his Majesty what had been written him from Bavaria; immediately the impatience to know what they were decyphering began to work; they accordingly waited for it the Thursday evening, the Friday all day, and the Saturday till five in the evening. It is true, when Mons. de Pomponne arrived, the whole was done; even in the morning following, the affair was not desperate; he was at his country-house, persuaded they would never suspect any thing of the matter: he there received the dispatches, which had been decyphered on the Friday evening; he set out on the Saturday morning at ten, but arrived too late. This then is the reason, the pretext, and what you please to call it: for there is no manner of doubt, but, either on this, or any other account, they were determined to destroy this good fortune, which, to tell truth, held but by a hair. But what is really subject of laughter in this affair, is, that the person who had plotted all this has reaped no sort of advantage from it, but has been vexed at it beyond imagination. Our friend asked, whether he might not be permitted to see his Majesty, and to justify his conduct to his master; he was told for answer, it was not proper at that time; that his fidelity was abundantly well known, that it was in no sort attacked, and that some time hence, he might

might possibly have that satisfaction. He writ, testifying his surprise and mortification, at having had the misfortune to disoblige; mentioned his eight children, without the smallest provision for them, and here the affair rested; one might say a great deal on the head; but this is enough, and perhaps too much, especially at such a distance.

So you have considered a little the countries of these two Burgundy counsellors, *it is my mamma's country*: I have a notion Mons. de Berbisi's acquaintance has rather the better of it. But Mons. de Condom, who loves you, and whom I honour extremely, comes presently into my head, so that in good sooth, I know not what to say to you, *do e'en as you like*. This is what I have told my son every time he came to take leave of me, before his visits in Lower Britany; I merely tolerated what I could not possibly prevent. He has been this month at Tonquedec's. I know not where to write to him, he wants none of my letters, would you have acted so by me? He makes Mons. d'Harouis perfectly mad with him, for he waits for him at Nantz, in order to return with him to Paris: I admire both of them, the one for his excessive goodness and patience, and the other for his barbarous usage. I know not whether the dear or indifferent object be with him; it will be all unravelled, I fancy, before the end of the year. Here's one of his letters come, he is now at Nantz, and after having made Mons. d'Harouis wait for him long enough, he lets him set out without being able to follow him, on account of some business he has to do at Buron; I have great doubts about this fine conduct of his. He says a great deal about his dear pigeon, and says he loves her greatly beyond all the mistresses he ever had. I shall not take upon me to pronounce, whether you ought to be satisfied with this: be satisfied at least with Madame de la Fayette, who has been just now making mention of you, in the most affectionate manner. We shall soon know who have been named by the Dauphiness; they will be declared on the arrival of the courier who is expected. There are some folks who say, Madame de Maintenon will be placed in such a situation, as will surprise all the world; this will not be on

Quanto's

Quanto's account, for it is the most pleasant occasion that has fallen out in our days; she really stands in need of nobody, but her own good sense only.

You make me really pity you, to talk of receiving oranges from our quarter of the globe; and it is a strange sort of change, to see them nipt by the frost in Provence; the sun, however, I hope, still remains untouched by them: you mention the softness of the month of May, which gives me some consolation for your disaster, I have see Mademoiselle de Meri, she has made an effort to come to see this pretty apartment; she does not like it; what a pity it is! She still continues in a very languishing condition; her uneasiness about her little household affairs, is really without end; I could never have thought so great a trifle could have taken up all her thoughts to such a degree. Monsf. and Madame de Mènes are going from hence; they have began to speak of you and Grignan a-new, and with great earnestness; your good house and your fine title; your Paulina's and her charms, your music, your terras, your politeness; all this ended with repeated and earnest entreaties, I would assure you both of their most humble service, respect, friendship, and gratitude; in short, I never in my life saw any body so hearty in their good wishes to you; I undertook to perform all this, an office of which I now acquit myself. I have been this moment told that Monsf. de Richelieu is to be Chevalier d'honneur; Madame, his wife, Lady of honour to the Dauphiness; Madame de Crequi Lady of honour to the Queen; I am apt to believe this true in every particular; they will actually be declared in a few days.

I wish I could describe to you the screen, which Monsf. the Cardinal d'Etrees, has made a present of to Madame de Savoy * in nature of a Sapate †, and of

* Marie-Jeanne-Baptiste de Savoyte Nemoure, mother to Victor-Amadeus-Francis, Duke of Savoy, afterwards King of Sicily, in 1713, and King of Sardinia, in 1720.

† This is the name of a sort of festival invented by the Spaniards, who celebrated it yearly on the 5th of December. It was afterwards introduced into Savoy, where Catherine of Spain, wife of Charles Emmanuel, Duke of Savoy, introduced the Sapate, and which has been kept up there ever since. This consists in making presents, but so as to conceal the hand from whence they come.

which Madame de la Fayette has had the whole care, it being entirely of her invention. You know Madame de Savoy wishes for nothing so much as the accomplishment of her son's marriage with the Infanta of Portugal, 'tis the gospel of the day. This screen is of the middle size; on one side, which is a piece of painting, is the Princess Royal in miniature, very like, and about as big as one's hand, accompanied by the virtues, distinguished by their proper symbols; which makes a groupe exquisitely beautiful, and extremely well understood. Opposite the Princess is the young Prince, beauteous as an angel, also after nature, surrounded by the loves and infantine sports; this little company is very pleasing to the sight. The Princess, with her right hand, shews her son the ocean, with the city of Lisbon. Glory and Fame are in the clouds over him, with crowns. Under the Prince are these words from Virgil:

Matre deâ monstrante viam.

Nothing was ever better imagined. The other side of the screen, is a most rich and beautiful piece of embroidery of gold and silver. The stand is of vermillion gilt, very rich and exceedingly well wrought. The nails which fasten the galeon are diamonds, as is the pivot which supports it. On the top of the stand is the crown of Savoy, consisting entirely of diamonds. In short, this present is so rich and the subject so pleasing, as to eclipse all the Sapates that ever were seen. This pretty screen is to be discovered standing before the fire, so as that the Princess Royal, seeing it immediately on her coming out of her closet, may have all the pleasure of a surprise. Ah, daughter, this is a present I could be glad I had it in my power to make: I do not know whether my description has done it justice.

L E T T E R CCCCLXXVI.

To the Same.

Paris, Monday, 25 December, 1679.

THE plague of separation, attended with all that accompanies ours, is terrible. I often spare you the trouble of reading the inquietudes I suffer on your account,

account, but then it is sometimes absolutely impossible for me to dissemble them: I must needs buzz them in your ears like *the fly*: I wish to God, it may not prove to no purpose, and that your regard for me, may produce such an effect, as to rouse your attention with respect to the care of your welfare, which you ought certainly to prefer all earthly considerations; without this, I shall no longer trouble myself in the preservation of that person who loves you beyond every thing; you must begin by the care of her who is dearest to me; why cannot I send you some of my extraordinary good health? I say not a word of it, since it shews itself sufficiently without it. I have spoke of your affairs to the Grignans; it is there I certainly act the part of the *fly*: they are entirely against the Toulon affair. Mons. de la Garde, and the Chevalier, are both of opinion, that it is a ridiculous fancy to think of it, except you had a mind to fall out with Mons. de Vendome. The Chevalier is gone to Saint Germain's; he is the person who is to take upon him the care of your courier's business; the handsome Abbé had before charged himself with it; there are in fact, other affairs besides. There are some bishopricks going to be given away: we must pursue this bagatelle a little longer, ere we can hope to succeed in it; this became the affair of Mons. Colbert, and of course came to nothing. It is true, I buzzed a little about it, and perched myself so nicely on the Chevalier's nose, that I persuade myself he will bring it me from Saint Germain's; I will do the rest: the excuse of his rheumatism hindered him from setting about it sooner. I admire, in all your affairs, however great or trifling, how unfortunate you are. Mons. de St. Geran is yet more so than you are, he is undone to all intents and purposes; he is like one dropped from the clouds, has not a word to say, whilst every body is pleased with his disappointment. He has had several severe strokes given him with his Majesty; the first was from the Count de Grammont, you know his way. "Sire, " says he, it is some time since I asked your Majesty " for the place of first equerry to Madame the Dau- " phiness; possibly your majesty may hold me unwor- " thy this employ; but when I see the huge Saint Ge-
" ran

"ran pretend to ask it, I hope Sire, it will be no presumption to name to your Majesty, the poor Count de Grammont." This has given rise to new thoughts and new reflections. There have been some yet more severe. The same Count found Saint Geran on both knees the other day at chapel, were he seemed not to take the least notice of the court which was there at the same time. "Friend, said he, clapping him on the shoulder, you must look for your comfort from the Lord Jesus Christ." The King could hardly keep from bursting out into a laugh. Yesterday he said to the Dauphin in presence of the King, "Monseigneur, I beseech you to tell Madame the Dauphiness, that it is not my fault, I am not of her household; I call his Majesty to witness." They are to set out towards the end of January to espouse that Princess. Are not you perfectly satisfied with the persons who have been named to it? Monf. de Richelieu and Marshal de Bellefond, will certainly very worthily acquit themselves of their employs, without even making any new places amongst the blue ribbons, when vacancies shall happen, which there would otherwise certainly have been. They have allowed Madame de S—— the same appointments and the same honours as to a lady of honour, without the title of one, that is to say, so much money in pocket: this, with the two thousand crowns which she is to retain, makes a yearly income of one and twenty thousand livres. On some peoples offering to compliment Monf. de S—— on the occasion, *Alas, this comes entirely by my wife, I ought not to receive any compliments on the account.* And Madame de R——, *You see what it is to be strongly attached to the Queen.* The world is still very charitable, as it always has been. The Dutchess de Sully is returning from Picardy, she is going to pass the winter at Sully, till such time as Madame de Vernueil returns. Madame de Lesdiguieres, richly deserves to be remembered by you, she always asks after you in the kindest manner, and begs me to tell you a hundred things from her. I have been at the midnight mass at the Blues, where it was intolerably hot; the afternoon's sermon

was

was excessively cold; it was an odd sort of a Jesuit, as I am an odd woman when I dine with the little society.

L E T T E R CCCCLXXVII.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 25 December, 1679.

THE whole family of the Pomponne's are come here to pass the holidays. Madame de Vins was the first that came, I had seen her twice. I saw Mons. de Pomponne, I mean Mons. de Pomponne who lives at Frene; or if you will, honest worthy Mons. de Pomponne, and not a jot more: as his being minister made no change in him, I can assure you his fall has made no kind of alteration more than that. He is excellent company; he mentioned you to me with abundance of kindness, and appeared much concerned at your last letter; this affair is not so soon discussed; I, on my side, told him in what manner you had writ to me in regard to his misfortune. Madame de Vins melted into tears when she spoke of the goodness of your heart. There was not a dry eye among us. They returned to Pomponne next day, having as yet been come to no settled resolution: they have not yet had their dismissal, and of course have had no money. He asked, whether he might not have permission to see the King, but has had no answer. I cannot see how he can be better than at Pomponne, inspiring his children with true and solid virtue, and in discouraging with the solitary folks who are there with him. Madame de Vins has done nothing but pay visits the whole day; she wants both you and Madame de Villars; she reckons me somebody, and I am happy in being at leisure to do her these trifling obligations. We have been to see the Ladies de Richlieu, de Chaulnes, de Crequi, de Rochefort; and afterwards Mons. de Pomponne, who appears every day more amiable than another; and is possessed of the soundest understanding, of any man this day living on the face of the earth. Madame de Vins is going to make a jaunt to Saint Germain's: what a grief, to behold that country once her own,

own, but where she is now an utter stranger! how I dread this journey for her! She will afterwards return to those unhappy folks, whose sole joy and consolation she is.

The court is overjoyed at the marriage of the Prince de Conti with Mademoiselle de Blois. They are real lovers of romance: the King was highly entertained with the ardour of their passion; he spoke to his daughter in a very tender and affectionate manner, assured her, he loved her so much, that he could not think of parting with her; the little creature was so moved and overjoyed at it that she wept. The King told her, he saw very well it was from her aversion to the husband he had made choice of for her; she burst into tears a second time, her little heart was unable to contain her excessive joy. The King told this pretty little scene, and every body was charmed with it. As for the Prince de Conti, he was transported with the thoughts of it; he knew neither what he did nor said; he jostled against all he met in his way, as he was going to visit Mademoiselle de Blois. Madame Colbert was against his seeing her till the evening; he burst open the doors, threw himself at her feet, and kissed her hand; she, without the least ceremony embraced him, and then burst into tears as usual. The good-natured little Princess is so tender and so pretty, that one could almost smother her with kindness. The Count de Grammont, amongst others, paid his compliments to the Prince de Conti; "Monsieur, said he, I am heartily glad of your marriage; take my advice, keep well with your father-in-law, do not disoblige him, nor fall out with him on every trifling matter; keep well with this family, and you will have no cause to repent the match I promise you." The King was tickled on hearing this, and marries his daughter, and at the same time like the rest, compliments the Prince, the Duke, and the Duchess, whose friendship he begs for Mademoiselle de Blois; adding, that she will be but too happy, to be often in her company, and to have an opportunity of copying after so excellent an example. He diverts himself with vexing the Prince de Conti, who is given to understand the marriage articles
are

are not without their difficulties, and the affair must absolutely be put off till the ensuing winter; on hearing this the amorous Prince seems to swoon away; the Princess at the same time vowing, she will never have any other husband. The catastrophe is somewhat allied to Don Quixote, and, in reality, there never was a finer piece of romance in this world.

You will easily imagine what pleasure this match, as well as the manner in which it has been concluded, creates in a certain place. The portrait of the Dauphiness is arrived, and she appears to be but indifferently handsome; they commend her wit, and sense, her teeth, her stature, that is, so many particulars in which de Troye's * art had nothing to do. I have thanked Mons. R. F. in your behalf. He has a very obliging regard both for you and Mons. de Grignan. Madame de la Fayette has her kindest compliments to you: Messieurs the Cardinals de Bouillon and d'Etrées, and the widows on all sides. I see nothing but people beseeching me to remember them to you.

Madame d'Effiat has neither spoiled any thing, nor is she spoiled herself. The Lady Marshal Clerambault is here; she supports disgrace like a true *Stoic*, and has no thoughts of opening a vein on the account; but she lost a thousand louis d'ors to the little d'Harouis, the evening she arrived, this is sufficient to us a light into the cause of what happened to her at the Palais Royal †.

L E T T E R CCCCLXXVIII.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday, 29 December, 1679.

FIGURE to yourself, my dear good girl, that I am on my knees before you, and that with abundant tears, I conjure you, by all the regard you ever had for me, never again to write me any particulars of your health, except exactly as you writ me the last time. I do request this so truly from the bottom of my heart, that it is impossible this truth should fail to convince yours. What! that I should have to reproach my-

* A famous portrait painter.

† See p. 341, &c.

self with being the cause of your being wholly weakened and exhausted! Alas, my dear girl, this thought alone does me hurt sufficient, without adding that of having killed you with my own hand. The affair is this, let me, let me, I beseech you, no longer be numbered amongst those, you call your devoirs: I have long since been hurt by the whole volumes you write me, and am frightened to death with the fears of what may have happened to you. In short, it is now too apparent, and I shall love Montgobert all my life after, for having obliged you to lay down your pen: this is, in my opinion, a piece of real friendship, and for which, I am going to write her my thanks; this is what I call seeing with ones eyes. I care not a straw for all the rest, they have eyes and see not; we both see alike, she and I, and for this reason I listen to no one but her only: she durst not say one word to me this time; her sincerity, and the fear of giving me matter of affliction, has hindered her from writing to me. Mademoiselle de Meri governs herself in a much superior manner; she writes not a syllable to any one. Corbinelli can kill himself at pleasure, it is no more than putting pen to paper, and he is a dead man: let him keep out of sight of his escrutoire but one week, and he is in a manner risen from the dead. Quit yours a little my dear, handsome tho' it be; did not I say right, in calling it putting a dagger into your hand against yourself? I saw du Chêne the other day; he spoke of your health, and told me, that good for nothing writing was as bad as hanging. You have been at Lambesc and Salon; these jaunts with your breast, could not miss being prejudicial to your health, a thing you abandon entirely, and seem not to give yourself any trouble about the matter. It would give you a deal of uneasiness to have nothing the matter with you; the company of the *Bohemians* must be complete, it seems, as if your health were as robust and vigorous as theirs. What you want, is to keep your bed, and at least your chamber, an undisturbed repose, and a most exact regimen: instead of these, 'tis a perpetual hurrying up and down, visiting, irregularity, and fatigue. We can have no hopes of you, daughter, whilst you prefer

fer every thing in the world to the care of your health. I have ordered this first of all human considerations, in a very different manner, and so as to hold every thing in nature foreign to me, in comparison of that earnest attention I have toward what concerns you ; but I will conclude this chapter for the present. I acquainted you yesterday, by a kind of label, of a billet tagged to the end of a monstrous huge letter, that Madame de S—— was sent into exile, all this proves false. It seems she has spoke, or perhaps grumbled a little, at her not having been a Lady of honour *, as the Queen would have had her ; perhaps too she might have spoke as if she despised her pension, compared to that fine place ; and upon that, the Queen has advised her to come and wear away her vexation at Paris. Here she is, and they say, is even ill of the measles ; she is not to be seen, but the world are of opinion she will return, as if nothing at all had ever happened. A great bustle has been made about nothing, the charitable spirit of wishing all the world *wounds* and *bunch-backs*, is spread abroad in a wonderful manner ; on the contrary, there are certain things, on account of which people find themselves disposed to pray for happiness, as in the times of the fairies. The marriage of Mademoiselle de Blois, is one of these which gives a sensible pleasure. The King bade her write her mother word † what he had been doing for her. All the world have been to pay their compliments to that Carmelite ; I fancy Madame de Coulanges will carry me there to-morrow, the Prince and Duke have been there in great haste ; they say she has suited her style to her black veil in a wonderful manner, and that she has seasoned her maternal tenderness with that of the spouse of Jesus Christ. The King marries his daughter, as if he were marrying the Queen's to the King of Spain ; he gives her five hundred thousand crowns of gold, as is commonly done with these potentates, excepting only this difference, that these will be actually paid ; whereas with the others, they are only meant to do honour to the alliance.

* See letter of the 25 December, p. 352.

† Madame de Valliere.

This pretty wedding is to be celebrated about the middle of January. Gautier has no longer any cause to complain, as he must touch this year, by reason of the marriage upwards of a million: they are to give immediately a hundred thousand livres to the Lady of Marshal de Rochefort, in order to begin making the dress of the Dauphiness. The Elector had written to the merchants of Paris to clothe his sister, the King has writ to him to give himself no manner of trouble about any thing, as the Princess will receive every thing she can have occasion for, from those of the household that are to be sent her. This marriage will be celebrated with abundance of splendor; they do not set out till the month of February. I expect Gordes with the utmost impatience, and will most assuredly leave *the skimming of my pot* * to whomsoever it shall please, that I may have the pleasure to ask him, *how daughier does*, and *what* she is doing? Should he answer me like the Chevalier de Buons †, I shall quit him with sighs; for it is by no means, without a sensible uneasiness, I am able to put up with the wonders I am told of your health. The Intendant is very happy in being so gallant, without the dread of rendering his wife jealous. I wish he could place his chess-men, so as that every time he cried *mat*, should be so many proofs of his passion. My passion for this game still continues; I pique myself in causing M. de la Trousse to make lies, and am sometimes apprehensive I shall not succeed. I am always well received when I come to pay your compliments, your remembering them is always an honour. Madame de Coulanges will needs write to you, in order to thank you herself, but it will be next year first. I fancy you will think I tell a fib, when I mention Fagon's and du Chênes being acquainted together; this was, my dearest, on occasion of Monsi. de Louvois's wound, when they were forty days together, and have contracted a very hearty regard for each other. Yes; do not laugh at it, you must consult your watch, to know when you are hungry; and when it tells you it is eight or nine

* That is, I will leave, to any body that pleases, the trouble of doing the honours of my house to my company.

† See letter 8 December, page 342.

hours since you have eaten any thing, you are to take a good mess of pottage, which will destroy the thing called an indigestion.

We may then hope to see the coadjutor, and to reckon a Princess amongst the number of his chickens. Alas! who can pretend to know, whether the little Princess be content? Ah, what a pretty story I have got to tell you of the Archbishop! but I will leave this to some other opportunity. Mons. de Pomponne is returned to the banks of his Marne; he had there, the other day in the evening, a greater number of persons of distinction, than he had ever had before his disgrace. This is the fruits of his having been still the same man to his friends, and you will see they will still be the same to him. Madame de Vins is still so much moved at it, as to melt into tears, which I have often seen gush from her fine eyes. She will make no visit without me, since she has lost you and Madame de Villars. She has my leave to dispose of my person, so long as she sees proper; I have too many reasons to be happy that it proves agreeable to her; she has some affairs which detain her here, in spite of herself, tho' in her heart she wishes to be at Pomponne; this attachment merits honour, and alleviates our common misfortunes. Adieu, my dear pretty creature, see you make me write after I have begun, for I must have a few lines of your writing: Mademoiselle de Grignan, Montgobert, Gautier, all of you take pity upon me. In short, daughter, take repose, be mindful of your health, and be sure you shut that desk of yours: it is the true temple of Janus; and know you cannot possibly give those who love you, either a more solid or sensible pleasure, than by preserving yourself for them, since it is certain death for you to put pen to paper.

L E T T E R CCCCLXXIX.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 1 January, 1680.

MAY the Almighty grant you a happy year, my dearest girl, and me that perfect felicity to see you once more in better health, than you are at present.

sent. I do assure you I am under an extreme concern on your account; possibly it freezes at Aix, as it does here, and your breast may be ill of course. I conjure you, in the tenderest manner, not to write so much to me, and not to answer me to every particular of the trifles I write you; hark you, persuade yourself it is some news-paper, for I promise you, I think no more of any thing I write after it is once gone from me: these precise answers are much too long for our correspondence. Tell me in three or four lines how you do, and your present situation; you may add, if necessary, but a word or two, and no more of business, except you can find some charitable person to write for you. The Chevalier is sitting by his own fire side, disabled in one haunch; this rheumatism of his, is a rare excuse. Madame de S*** is still shut up at her own house*, where she gives out she has got the measles; it is thought this illness will last a considerable time. She pretended to claim the same entrances with a Lady of honour; their Majesties were of a different opinion. She says her pension was by no means enough for her; she must have said a great deal more than this. In short, she is now at Paris, that is past all doubt; as for the other stories, it is all a mere chaos, where every one says what he thinks proper. The Dauphiness has written some letters, which are thought so reasonable, just, and upright, as to give the world a very favourable opinion of her good sense and prudence. Her portrait is not that of a handsome person. You have heard how the prophecy of a second Lady of the bed-chamber has been happily fulfilled. Gordes is not yet arrived, I am extremely desirous to see one who has seen you. You will then send me *etrennes*, I am very apprehensive they will be too fine: my own are so light, that the smallest puff of an easterly wind will carry them off. I have heard nothing of those of Saint Germain's. The Princess Royal was in raptures at sight of her screen, the young Prince and the courtiers said nothing; this settlement vexes them, as much as it pleases the mother. However, all is signed and settled in Portugal; I know not how providence will develope all.

* See Letter 29 December, 1679.

Monf. de Pomponne has had his difmiffion, but not any money; he is returned to Pomponne. Madame de Vins is here, ſhe was thinking of going to Saint Germain's, but would firſt aſk Madame de Richelieu's advice, who is here at Paris. We had enough to do to procure acceſs to her: the Abbé Têru got us admittance, which Madame de Coulanges could not effect; Madame de Vins therefore waited for Madame de Richelieu's answer, before ſhe undertook the journey; I paid your compliments, at the ſame time with my own, to that Duchefs; I told her, her great merit obliged us to an extraordinary kind of compliment, which was to congratulate with her, that ſhe was no longer Lady of honour to the Queen*; that ſhe was the only perſon capable to inform us, whether there was any thing beſides to compliment her on; all this was commented upon, ſo as not to wound her ſelf love. I will take care to preſent your compliments to Madame d'Effiat †, Madame de Rochefort ‡; and if I poſſibly can, to Madame de Vibraye §, who by reaſon of the ſituation of her affairs, has accepted of the place of Lady of honour to the Princeſs de Conti: it is ſaid the King will have a ride in the Queen's coach, as well as Madame de Montchevreuil; this is a cure for all ills. Madame de Langeron will recover her loſt precedency at the ſame time; for ſhe had had the ſame honour when ſhe was governeſs. Here's poor Vibraye ſwimming in pleaſures, ſhe has great occaſion to mortify the fleſh, like our friend Tartuffe. This place had been offered Madame de Frontenac, which was convenient enough for the Lady of a governor of Quebec; but ſhe answered ſhe valued her repoſe and *divine* ¶, much above a life of ſo much buſtle and parade: 'tis all mighty well, for Madame de Vibraye has reaſon to take in good part, their making choice of her for ſuch a place at her age.

* Madame de Richelieu was Lady of honour to the Queen, when ſhe was choſen to be Lady of honour to the Dauphineſs.

† Governeſs to the Prince's children.

‡ Firſt Lady of the bed-chamber to the Dauphineſs.

§ Prolixenale Coigneux, wife to Henry Herault, Marquis de Vibraye.

¶ Mademoiſelle d'Outrelaiſe, an intimate friend of Madame de Frontenac.

Monf. and Madame de Chaulnes fend you a thousand compliments, you know their ftyle, and Madame de Coulanges a hundredthouſand; ſhe would not conſent her father ſhould buy the houſe *, which pleaſes me mightily. I have always the cheſs-board in my noddle, tho' I fancy I ſhall never attain to play well whilſt I live. Herbert has given Corbinelli check mate ſix times running, ſo he is as mad as a March hare; this is all he has got at the hôtel de Condé. I muſt bid you farewell, daughter, for what gives me the moſt horrible apprehenſions, is to think of your long long letters. Thus we change as circumſtances do, but never, except only on your account, and from my tender affection for you, which is incapable of change, and is now become *part of my very ſoul*: I am not ſure whether the expreſſion may be tolerated, but then I am perfectly aſſured, that to live and love you are to me but one and the ſame thing.

L E T T E R CCCCLXXX.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday, 5 January, 1680.

AH, my deareſt, how much am I obliged to Madame du Janet, for taking the pen out of your hands! If by means of the bad air of Salon, and your eternal fatigues, you are relapſing every moment, how much reaſon have I, in conjuring you a thouſand times, to lay aſide all thoughts of writing? You talk of your diſeaſe with a ſkill that aſtoniſhes me, but the intereſt I take in your welfare, enables me to underſtand all you tell me of it. How much I wiſh that accuſed eaſterly wind, and that wicked ſouth, would let you alone. Then what a cruel miſfortune it is, to be expoſed to the blaſt of two winds that are ſo often abroad, and eſpecially in Provence! I aſk you, daughter, whether I ought not to be exceeding uneaſy at your preſent condition?

I was yeſterday at the Great Carmelites with MADEMOISELLE, who luckily bid Madame de Leſdiguières bring me along with her. We accordingly entered that

* The hotel de Caravalette.

sacred abode ; I was charmed with the good sense of mother Agnes, she mentioned you, as knowing you by means of her sister *. I saw Madame Stuart, who is both happy and contented. I saw Mademoiselle d'Epernon, who found me not much altered ; we had not seen each other for upwards of these thirty years ; she seemed to me most horribly changed indeed. Little Ju Janet never left me, she has taken the white veil but within these three days ; she is the prodigy of fervour and of devotion : I am going to relate this to her mother. But what an angel † appeared to me at last ! For it seems the Prince of Conti, had kept her all the while in the parlour. She was in my eyes, an assemblage of all the charms I had ever beheld ; I found her neither overgrown nor yellow ; she is not quite so thin as formerly, but abundantly more contented ; the same eyes, and the same looks ; neither austerities, bad nourishment, nor want of sleep, have been able to hollow or dim them ; the habit, strange as it is, has had no effect on the gracefulness and comeliness of her mein and person ; as for her modesty, it is just what it was, when she was delivered of the Princess of Conti ; but then she is modest enough for a Carmelite. She said a world of civil things to me, and then mentioned you so justly and so a-propos : every thing she uttered was so becoming her character, that it is impossible for any thing to exceed it. Mons. de Conti loves her, and bears her a most unlimited respect ; she is his director ; this Prince is very devout, and will, like his father, continue ever such. In reality, this habit and retirement add a wonderful dignity to her person.

You have seen the effect of my prophecy. No surely, the qualified person cannot, in any degree, come into competition with the sick body ‡ ; for her she considers as her friend, and a person of confidence. The Lady, who is above all, does the same ; so that she is the very soul of this court. I take a pleasure to give you this piece of news a few days before hand, as in-

* The Marchioness de Villars.

† Madame de la Valiere.

‡ Madame de Maintenon.

deed I received it myself. As for the person, that is not to be seen *, and whom no soul mentions, she is as well as heart could wish; she sometimes shews herself like some deity, but holds no earthly correspondence; she has given most magnificent new years gifts to her predecessor and all her children, to make up for those of times past, which were omitted, as your louis d'ors were but scarce then.

Madame de S— is still at Paris, where she refuses to see any one; 'tis believed she will remain there longer than she thinks for, she has said several things which have given offence. The Prince has prayed Beauvais to leave the Palais-Royal, he found her in the Princesses chamber, in conversation with the Count de Soissons †. She is at Madame de Vibraye's. Here is the true secret, to get Beauvais married to that Prince, who would make it a point of honour not to abandon her, as what she suffers is on his account. 'Tis said Madame de Vibraye will be appointed a Lady of honour to the Princess of Conti, but with all the privileges of a Lady of the palace.

I have this morning received a prodigious long letter from Madame de Villars; I would have taken care to send it you, if it contained any thing but three articles you very well know before; that is, the esteem, admiration tenderness you know she entertains for you; much affection and astonishment at Mons. de Pomponne's misfortune, which you are but beginning to get the better of; the news from Spain, and the praises of Madame de Grancei, which you know likewise. It moreover appears, she confines herself a good deal at home, as she wants to shun all appearance of uneasiness, and to give the lie to the prophecies. The Queen is to see her *incog.* but she obliges them to use abundance of intreaty first, in order to give her merit a new lustre. The Queen is perfectly adored, she made her appearance the last time at the Queen's, her mother-in-law's, dressed in the French fashion. She teaches the King French,

* Mademoiselle de Fontanges.

† Louis Thomas de Savoy, Count de Soissons, married in December, 1682, Urania la Cropte-de-Beauvais.

and the King teaches her Spanish: all goes well hitherto.

Madame de Coulanges is at Saint Germain's, where she is prodigiously busy about the affair of new years gifts; and the poor la Trouffe has by chance got the whole fatigue of it. He is always very busy; and she again, hard-fisted, contemptuous, and satyrical; it is impossible to form any idea of their method of going on. The Marchioness (de la Trouffe) is for ever in a fury, and her daughter always out of all patience. I keep every correspondence you desire I should. Madame de Lesdiguières has given me a thousand compliments for you, and in a very acceptable manner. I make your compliments to Madame de Rochefort, and as for her companion *, Madame de Coulanges will take the office on herself. Madame de Vins is still here, the other ladies are at Pomponne, their hotel at Paris had like to have been burnt; one room, with all that was in it, was entirely consumed; but what is worthy of admiration is, that the powder in it did not take fire, else it had blown the house entirely up; this would have compleated their ruin, but it has pleased God to preserve them. Farewel, my dearest lovely creature. My son, who is still at Nantz, would be well pleased to put off his return till the Dauphiness becomes big: I laugh at his notion, and have writ to him, either to come away or to sell his office.

L E T T E R CCCCLXXXI.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 10 January, 1680.

HAD I a heart of crystal, in which you might view the perfect grief with which I am penetrated, at your wishing my life may exceed yours in number of years, you would then plainly perceive with how much truth. I pray providence would make no change in the ordinary course of nature; that providence, who has called me into the world be-

* Madame de Maintenon.

fore you, that I might be your mother ; reason, and the established order of things require me to depart the first ; and God himself knows with what ardour I beg of him, that this order may be preserved in my case. I cannot believe but the justness of this sentiment must move you, as much as I am moved by it : after this reflection, you will have no difficulty in conceiving the interest I take in your preservation. I conjure you, by all the power of the regard you entertain for me, never to write me above a sheet at the most ; bid somebody write to me, and even give over dictating, as it is really fatiguing. In short, I cannot find the least pleasure, in what gave the highest satisfaction heretofore, when you were absent ; and the length of your letters really does me more harm, than they do to you. I do beseech you, deliver me from this torment, I will still have left me but too much. Madame de Schomberg advises, since you must needs drink coffee at all events, to sweeten it with Narbonne honey instead of sugar, this will soften your breast ; it is allowed Monsi. de Schomberg, only when qualified in this manner. He has been extremely ill these six or seven months last past ; I told you what an excellent effect my physic had on me, and the cherry-water too. As for my hands, I look upon them as perfectly cured, and never trouble myself about them. Ah, my dear child, think of nothing but your health, neglect nothing you think capable of affording you any relief ; you are too well acquainted with the nature of friendship, to make any doubt of what I suffer, when I think of your present condition, a thought which never quits me. I am entirely of your opinion in every particular, regarding the household of the Dauphiness. Marshal d'Humieres has writ Bouville, that he is the servant of the devout, ever since he saw the Marshal de Bellefond was made equerry, Madame d'Effiat governess, and Madame de Vibraye Lady of honour. They say, this last has been rejected, as having made a great pudder, and multitude of requests. It is pretended, that any place a person is chosen for, be it what it will, in *the Lord's house*, is an additional honour to the person so chosen. Formerly the Queen's
Ladies

Ladies of honour were Marchionesses, and all the great offices in the King's household were filled with Lords only; at this day, all the world are Dukes and Marshals of France, so that every thing is become greater.

Monf. de Pomponne is come here to settle his affairs, and is going to receive his money. I see Madame de Vins pretty frequently, who as she has nothing particular to say, writes you no letter, to avoid putting you to the fatigue of writing unnecessarily. Monf. de Buffi and his daughter * dined here twice; they have in reality abundance of wit; they earnestly beg I would make their compliments to you. Little Coulanges is here, just the person you have always seen her. The Lady of Marshal de Rochefort brought her with her into the presence of the Dauphiness: I advised her to make that journey, as she had no better employment on her hands; and perhaps it may do her some good, to send us some pretty entertaining accounts of things. Farewel, my dearest, I know no manner of news: I am even of opinion, that by making my letters not quite so prodigiously long, I may occasion you fewer reflections, and possibly diminish your keenness to write. This is what I sincerely desire, as I can form no wish, but what has your good for its object.

My son is returned into Bretagne, to spend his twelfth tide; he assures me he will be here the 20th, which pray God grant he may. Madame de S*** is still invisible †; she will be at Paris longer than she thinks for; she has been extremely well served in this country. Mademoiselle de Fontange is an extraordinary beauty, she appears in the gallery like some goddess; and Madame de Montespan on the other side, like another goddess. The extraordinary has given new years gifts to the amount of six thousand pistoles ‡. Madame de Coulanges has been greatly admired for the part she has had the management of.

* Louisa-Frances de Rabutin, Marchioness de Coligni.

† See letter 5 January, page 262.

‡ See page 364.

To the same.

Paris, Friday, 12, January, 1680.

I CONJURE you, daughter, never to make peace with that enemy of yours, the escrutoire, which is alone sufficient to exhaust you; and this, not only in compliance with the present necessity, but from a firm resolution of shunning every thing in the least pernicious to you. It is the preservation of my life to be careful of your own. I yesterday acquainted you with Madame Schomberg's advice, to sweeten your coffee with Narbonne honey, instead of sugar: I have since met du Chêne by pure accident, who is absolutely against coffee in any shape whatever. You may make the experiment however. Should Mons. de Grignan be offended with me, and if you think my approving the billet he writ Madame de Coulanges, may contribute to soften him, I flatter myself you will not let slip that occasion of making up matters betwixt us. I never in my life met with any thing so well imagined as the close of that billet, nor of so gallant a turn. Madame de Coulanges is still more taken with it than I, and Mons. de la Trousse, who happened to be at her house, has overcome his usual coldness, in his admiration of it; he it was who made me send it away yesterday in the evening. Your letter to Madame de Coulanges is very fine, but that of Mons. de Grignan eclipses all. Try what you are able to make of this, in order to repair the injustice done me; you must add too my real sentiments, which might justly plead my excuse for any trespass I could possibly commit; for if all this were well translated, it amounts to this, my friendship, my regard and veneration for a name and house, which he ought to honour still more than I; it is the misfortune arising from a number of concurring circumstances, which lights on a person I love so entirely, and who returns all my affection; but then, since this person is but his other self, and he will needs be so severe to himself, it is by no means sufficient, it will never satisfy, and we could wish it were in our power to bestow upon him a greater

greater share of sensibility, both with regard to that person and to himself: this your address can easily effect, with so large a stock of excellent matter; for, in reality, I could not help being vexed, to think I had fallen out with a man who writes so charmingly. I could be glad to know whence he draws such thoughts, and those noble and gallant turns, which are capable to render a downright satire the most obliging thing in the world. Whilst I am got on the subject of letters, I must say a word or two of that of Paulina to the coadjutor; I tell you, I am apprehensive she will one day shame her relations: I never in my life saw a young person so properly christened; meantime, till she puts us all to the blush, I embrace her in the most affectionate manner, and I rejoice with you at her natural and pleasant wit. I begin to fear the Marquis has fallen out of conceit with me, pray ask him whether I am mistaken.

The King is immensely liberal in his largesses; in good troth, I see yet no reason to despair; if a body may not be fortunate enough to be groom of his bed-chamber, one may hope, by making one's court, one may be in the way of somewhat at least: this much is certain, that all our services go for nothing, whilst we keep at a distance; it has been otherwise formerly. I spent the whole evening of yesterday with Monsi. and Madame de Pomponne; Madame de Vins and I had been to visit the Countess de Roze, in order to pay her our compliments of condolence, on the death of old Rouci. You are, in reality, greatly beloved and esteemed in this family; I told them you omit no opportunity of enquiring after them; their gratitude is at least equal to the interest you take in their fortunes. Monsi. de Pomponne will have occasion for all his philosophy, to enable him to forget this country entirely, and to accustom himself to live at Paris. Do you know that there is a kind of fatality in this vortex, which prevents our being able at first to discover the charms of tranquillity and repose? As he is of this opinion, we ought to believe him possessed of solid good sense. He is now employed in receiving his money, and in discharging his debts: this piece of business

both renews his affliction, and determines his future condition of life. I am well assured Madame de Vins's destiny being enveloped in his, creates him real sorrow; this is a way of thinking extremely natural, and at the same time what she is exceeding worthy of, on account of those she entertains on her part. I think I never saw so many fine things in one place, as there are in this house. We talked much of Madame de Richelieu, who is beginning to find her legs, and who at present having no time either to eat or sleep, ought at length to dread the fate of one who had a much greater share of sense than she, and was much better used to noise; for before Madame de Montausier* came to the Louvre, so the hotel de Rambouillet was the Louvre, so that she has only changed the scene of her hurry. We are every moment expecting to hear the Princess de Conti's Lady of honour named, it is high time she were appointed, she is to be married on Tuesday.

Your brother is by no means worried with eagerness to make his court, he is carousing at his ease at Tonquedec's: I conceal all under the mask of business I have for him at Nantz, tho' Mons. de la Trousse chides me severely for employing him in any such matters. It might have been concluded long since, had he thought fit; it is true, he will not make his appearance yet for this fortnight; and to pay him a compliment which is but his due, when he is here, he performs his part extremely well; he pleases, and is thought exceeding good company. A-pro-pos, poor Pomenars was cut yesterday, and underwent the operation with most heroic courage indeed. Madame de Chaulnes shewed me the example to visit him; his stone is as large as a small hen's egg; he cackles like a woman newly brought to bed, and has more joy than ever he had pain; and to fulfill Mons. de Maille's prophecy, who one day told Pomenars he would never die unconfessed, he went to confess the day before the operation to the great Bourdaloue. Ah, what a charming confession was here! he was with him four hours; I asked him whether he had told all; he swore he had, and that he had not a grain of mortal

* Julai-Lucia d'Angennes, Datchess de Montausier, was governess to the Prince, and afterwards first Lady of honour to the Queen.

fin about him *; for he had told all, and you know there is nothing to be said after that: he did not languish at all after the absolution, and the thing went off well enough: the best of it was, he had not confessed these eight or ten years past: he mentioned you to me, and is so gay, that his tongue never lies still. I shall make your compliments to the other gentleman, who is always so happy and contented †; and with whom it may with great justice be said, that he has resources of hope, which smelt strong of these cells you know of; except in this only particular, he does not want for good sense: his daughter ‡ would delight you. I am chattering, my dearest, without telling you any news, because I know of none. The Duke of Hanover is dead at Venice, and his wife is settled here with very little substance, and three little girls: Mons. d'Osnabruck is the person who succeeds him. Madame de Meckelbourg lodges in the rue Tarane, where la Marans did: it is far from being like the hotel de Longueville. I have told you of all the beauties, and all the new years gifts: Fontanges has given to the amount of twenty thousand crowns, without ever dreaming of making a present to Madame de Coulanges, who has been at a world of pains in preparing those she gave away to others! her star is really very droll on all occasions; for the things the most easy to comprehend, are become absolutely inconceivable. My dear girl, make me no answer to all these trifling matters, they hardly merit the trouble of reading; be careful of yourself, write little; but yet I would have you say a word or so about that cholic that constantly attends you. Gue-mené, the mother, had promised to return from the country, to conduct her daughter-in-law to Saint Germain's; she makes her languish, perhaps out of mere malice. Here is, however, a fine season for her, she will find none of the Soubises nor the Luines in the way.

* It was no secret that the Marquis de Pomenars had several times been tried for his life, and one among the rest, for falsifying the coin.

† Mons. de Buffi.

‡ The Marchioness de Coligni.

LETTER CCCCLXXXIII.

To the same.

Paris, Wednesday, 17 January, 1680.

THE time is no more, my poor girl, when it was my chief consolation to receive a long letter from you ; at present it is real pain to me : and when I think of that which writing occasions you, and of the real hurt it does you, I maintain your letters can never be sufficiently short ; and that, had you any concern about yourself, or were you at all concerned for me, you must undoubtedly, whether from necessity or precaution, pursue this conduct. When you find yourself at all uneasy, repose yourself ; if you do not, yet preserve yourself ; and since that health which is so precious, but of whose value were we never so well convinced, as after it is no more, obliges you take care of yourself, think it your only business, and that for which I shall hold myself chiefly indebted to you. You seem to me to be under the greatest affliction, on account of the great charge you have been at in Aix ; it is really cruel, whereas you thought to have recovered your affairs a little in Provence, to find them in a worse condition than before ; you wish to be at Grignan, it is the only place you tell me, where you can live within bounds ; I am satisfied, some small stay at your castle, might be of service to you on this account ; but your present situation will not allow you to place this consideration before all others, this belongs solely to the care of your health : this is what ought to regulate all your proceedings ; or pray what human consideration, can possibly induce those who love you, to leave you in an air, which destroys you in a very sensible manner ? You, who are so sensible of the ill effects of the easterly winds at Aix and Salon, ought to be much more apprehensive of those of Grignan *. Thus,

* The castle of Grignan stands very high, and of course is more exposed to all winds than either Aix or Salon. The *bize* is a wind which blows from the North-east, and is dangerous for those who have any weakness in their breast, especially in the provinces adjoining to the Alps and the Mediterranean, where the *bize* is also very unfavourable to navigation. This seems to be a sort of Levant wind, common in all the countries on the Mediterranean.

daughter,

daughter, you must of necessity come to some prudent resolution: when you come here, you must lay aside your common way of never resting in one place; there is no good to be got by this perpetual hurrying from place to place; you must change your style as your health and constitution change; you say positively, I will travel no longer, I will absolutely take my rest; but in place of sincerely informing Mons. de Grignan who loves you, who would be loth to lose you, and who sees, as well as I do, how necessary repose and good air are for you, of your situation, it appears, that, on the contrary, you want to deceive him and yourself, by telling him you are in perfect health, when at the same time you are as ill as you possibly can be. The business then is to correct this wrong procedure, which have hitherto served no other purpose but the ruin of your health. We shall talk about it some other opportunity, but I could not help telling you so much, and leave you to make the proper reflections.

I fancy you will find the court pretty stormy. You have reason to be astonished at Madame de S***, no soul is acquainted with the genuine cause of this disgrace, it does not appear she will be a victim; she wanted a place the King had no intention she should have; a great many epigrams might be said on the occasion. As soon as she found all the distinction she was to enjoy, reduced to an augmentation of her salary, she spoke of it, complained of it, came up to town. *I am come, and here I am still*, &c. It would be no very difficult matter, to give the rest of these verses a proper turn. Not a soul is allowed to see her, brother, sister, aunt, nor cousin; she has no company on earth but Madame de R——. It is impossible to make her utter what she never said, as she is quite a recluse; but, on the other hand, she has been well served at court, and is in hopes to return soon. There are some who are of opinion, she may possibly find herself mistaken; if this ever happens, she must lead a new life; a longer return would hardly be supportable: Madame de R—— is not to be seen neither. There is
a fine

a fine Lady the fewer, at the entertainments to be made on occasion of the grand wedding. Mademoiselle de Blois is now in reality Princess of Conti; she was betrothed on Monday in great state, and married yesterday in the face of the sun, in the chapel of St. Germain; a grand banquet on the eve of it, after dinner a play, and in the evening the putting to bed, the shirt and shift being given by the King and Queen. If I happen to see any person from court, before I close this letter, I will add a postscript. But consider, I beseech you, the fine consequences of scrambling after places; it is certain the Ladies, who were named to be Ladies of honour to that Princess, had made all possible dispatch. Chance will have it, that Madame de Buri* who is fifty leagues off, must needs come into Madame Colbert's head; she has seen her formerly, and mentions her to Mons. de Lavardin her nephew; mentions her to the King too; she is found just the person they could have wished for; they write to her; she is to have a pension of six thousand livres, with the privilege of riding in the Queen's coach. They have written to Father Bourdaloue, who is her confessor, for she is no *Jansenist*, like Madame de Vibraye; this is the word which has suppressed this latter, tho' she is under the direction of Saint Sulpicius, who is, in matters of doctrine, of a piece with the Jesuits. In short, the courier is set out, and is expected back to-morrow. Madame de Lavardin makes Madame de Buri a present of a black robe, a petticoat, a point handkerchief, with a pair of ruffles, all ready to put on. La Sen—in vain turns about Bourdaloue, there are no news. You wonder there should be so much scrambling, you are not by yourself; but the present phrenzy is to be there *in ogni modo*. So then here is a friend of the Coadjutor's in place still; she is a very mill-clack for a talker, as you know; she talks *Buri*, that is, a particular language by itself; but it has had no share in procuring her the place. That of the Lady Marshal de Clerembault is very extraordinary; she is protected by the Princess, who would feign have made her Lady of ho-

* Anne-Marie d'Eurie d'Arguebonne, widow of Francis de Roostaing, Count of Buri.

nour to the Queen. She is going to court as if nothing had happened; she seems to have lost all memory of her having been what she is no more, that is, Governess*.

I now begin to think you as jealous a wife, as *Monsi. de Grignan* is a fond husband. *Montgobert* mentions a ball, where I think I see the pretty little *Marquis* dance charmingly. Pray is *Paulina* as fond of dancing as her sister *d'Adhemar*? this single accomplishment is all that is wanting, to make her the most charming creature on earth. Ah, daughter, be happy in diverting yourself with that pretty child, and do not send her where she will probably be spoiled; I have a vast desire to see her. I am going to tell you something very droll, and *Corbinnelli* is witness to it; I told him on Monday morning, I had been dreaming all that night of one *Madame de Rus*; that I could not for my heart, account how such a thought should get into my head, and that I would consult you, to be informed who this witch could be. Upon this, I received your letter, in which you mention the very person, as if you knew what I wanted; this accident I thought mighty pleasant, so that I have now got the information I wanted; it is indeed vastly strange, to see a man in love with this creature to such a degree as to ruin himself for her. But she always captivates in this manner; I have nothing near so marvellous to acquaint you of. I have not yet forgot the *Count de Soize*; *Monsi. de Saint Omer*, his brother, has been at the point of death, and has received all the last sacraments; he refused to be blooded, tho' in a high fever, attended with an inflammation. The English physician caused him to be blooded by force, guess whether he stood in need of it, and afterwards with his medicine he raised him to life, and in a few days he will play at chuck farthing again. Alas, the poor *Lieutenant's Lady*, that was so fond of *Monsi. de Vins*, and was so apprehensive he should not know it, is dead, and then so very young; pray let me know what she died of; I am always alarmed at the death of young folks. You have great reason to complain of my bringing you up badly; had you learned to

* See letter, 25 December, page 350.

take the time as it flies, it would have contributed greatly to your amusement.

Pray did not you remark the Dutch Gazette? It enumerates those who are to have places about the Dauphiness; Monf. de Richelieu, Gentleman of honour; the Marshal de Bellefond, first equerry; Monf. de Saint Gerom *nothing* at all*. You must allow all this is very pleasant. In short, this whim has reached Holland. My son is still the darling of Kimper; tho' I fancy he is now at Nantz, and that he will be here by the end of the month. You see I brought him in a much better manner than I did you. I hope in a fortnight's time he will not be seen there, but will be ready to set out with the rest. Be sure you do not write, and, for heavens sake, do not so much as think of answering me to every article I write you; I shall forget the greatest part of them myself in three weeks time. If Montgobert's health will permit her to write for you, she will be a prodigious relief to you, and will even save you the fatigue of dictating; she writes just as we ourselves do.

I am much taken with your resolution to eat suppers; this is a vast deal better than your twelve spoonfulls of milk. Alas, daughter, I change hourly, nor would I so much as know what I would be at: what I wish above all things, you could recover your health; you must pardon me, if I run after whatever I think best; and if I change my resolutions, it is alway under the name and prospect of some good. As for you, my dearest, never suffer yourself to change in that good opinion you ought to have of yourself, let fortune shew herself ever so cross and spiteful. Indeed did she but think fit to grant it, Monf. and Madame de Grignan might well enjoy the rank at court which is their right: but you know where all these matters are resolved upon, and the fruitlessness of that vexation which it is impossible not to have on that account.

I know not even a little as yet of what has passed at the wedding. I do not so much as know whether it was by sunshine or by moon-light. I shall go to

* See letter 25 December, 350.

Madame

Madame de Vins's to make up my packet, and will acquaint you with what I can learn. However, I will tell you a very great piece of news, which is, that the Prince shaved himself yesterday; he was actually shaved, I do assure you it is no riddle, nor a thing said at random, it is a real matter of fact; the whole court was witness to it, and Madame de Langeron, taking hold of the occasion when he had his paws laid across, as the lion does, caused them to put on him a coat with diamond buttons; a valet de chambre too, by an abuse of his patience, frizzled and powdered his hair, and at last brought him to the figure of a courtier of the first fashion, and gave his hair a grace, that confounded the finest peruke of them all; this is the miracle of the marriage. The Prince of Conti's dress was inestimably rich; it consisted of an embroidered suit, adorned with diamonds of a very large size, so as to tally with dark-raised figures of a stuff wrought-velvet-fashion, on a straw-coloured ground. It is said the ground had but an indifferent effect, and that Madam de Langeron, who is the soul of all that is done at the hotel de Condé, has fallen sick on the account. In fact it is a thing which admits of no sort of consolation. The Duke, the Duchess, and Mademoiselle de Bourbon, wore three different suits, enriched with jewels, which were changed every day. But I forget what is best of all, that is, the Prince's sword was enriched with diamonds,

La famosa spada,
Al' cui valori ogni vittoria e certa *.

The lining of the Prince of Conti's cloke was a black fatten, studded with diamonds. The Princess was romantically fine, happy and contented.

Qu'il est doux de trouver dans un amant qu'on aime †.
Un epoux que l'on doit aimer ‡.

And this is all I know of the matter, I will let you know what I can learn in the evening. I advise you

* That famous sword which is always certain of victory.

† How charming to find in the shepherd we love,

‡ The husband whom duty commands us t' approve!

to get some person to read the Gazettes to you, they extremely well written.

Monsr. Courtin is returned from Saint Germain's, he saw all; it was the sun that enlightened the marriage at noon; the moon was a witness to what passed afterwards. The King embraced the Princess in the tenderest manner after she was put to bed, and besought her to have no contest with the Prince of Conti, but to be gentle and obedient; I dare say so she was.

L E T T E R CCCCLXXXIV.

To the same.

Paris, Wednesday, 19 January, 1680.

I DID not ask you to write me a sheet, I wanted but a page, or rather one single line from your hand; in short, nothing but what you might have done without putting yourself to the smallest inconvenience. If you are ill, my dear girl, you cannot possibly write; if otherwise, keep yourself quiet, and beware of a relapse. When the weather is temperate here, I conclude it must be still more so at Aix; but then the temperate air of that place is extremely piercing, and proves sometimes as troublesome to you as your *bise* *. Pray, when you walk abroad on one of those fine days, which I well remember, do you feel the same heaviness and lowness of spirits? are you always in the same manner more or less affected with it? I admire how one can be for ever musing in one train of thought, and how distant every thing else appears: 'tis exactly the self same glass which brings objects near, or sends them to a greater distance from us.

I must thank you for your pretty new-year's gifts; they are very useful to me, I am charmed I have got them, and the time is coming, when I shall offer you up my daily, but mental thanks for them. Should they happen to change colour, I shall take care to make no inference from that circumstance, with regard to your friendship for me: the case is vastly different with respect to my pitiful new year's gifts; the moment I cease to love you, they will grow as green as a leek;

* A north-east wind coming off the mountains.

observe

observe them close, daughter, I refer you entirely to this visible mark, so that without my taking the smallest trouble, or so much as saying a word about the matter, you will be in a condition to form a judgment of the true state of my mind. Therefore I thank you for your pretty present, and I receive as a mark of your regard, the value you set upon mine, tho' intrinsically of little or no worth to you. This is the only chagrin my narrow circumstances give me, but then that chagrin is by no means so small as this; I am entirely penetrated with it, and look upon the plenty of Madame de Verneuil *, as a pleasure much surpassing her princedom. I forget to tell you, what I did not recollect till this very moment, that I had just wrote to her. I have not yet seen Mons. de Gardes, but will go to find him out. You have not hit the mark in regard to your prophecies, you will still find Mesdames de Crequi and de Richelieu Ladies of honour †. The choice is too excellent to admit of their having any companions in office, the King never had the smallest thoughts of allowing the honours and privileges of that place to Madame S——, and it is because she both expected, and gave it out she was to have these, she is now at Paris: as she found on its being explained to be no more than an augmentation of her salary to ten thousand livres, she complained and spoke of it; this is all I know of the affair. The good offices of that part of the country, have been very generously done her in her absence. She keeps herself retired, that she may no longer be under a necessity to speak ‡. Yet for all these fancied measles, and this perfect retirement, we spectators are far from being satisfied. It is, however, believed all will be made up again in time; but then, here is a fine wedding she has lost the sight of; this is far from being a matter of indifference to a person, who thinks there is no living out of a court. Mons. de Marsillac is so entirely taken up with hunting and attendance at court,

* Charlotte Seguier, widow of Maximilian de Bethune, Duke of Sully, and married a second time 29 October, 1668, to Henry de Bourbon, Duke of Verneuil.

† See letter 13 December, page 346.

‡ See letter 17 January, page 372.

that he is like an *imbenecido*. He neither answers Mons. la Rochefoucault's nor Langlade's letters, tho' they wholly regard his own affairs. Not but that were Mons. de Grignan to come to take a dinner with him, or to put it in his power to serve him, he would still find him the same hearty friend as ever; this his father is every day assuring me of, and at the same time presents you his most hearty compliments, and always asks after your health in a most obliging manner. Madame de la Fayette shews greater kindness still, both to your old and newly acquired friend. That of Madame de Vins appears to be most unfeigned; she conjures you not to write to her; a person must certainly have no sort of regard for you, to require of you what could not fail to prove hurtful to you, which writing most assuredly must. When I visit Mons. de Pomponne, I no longer consider him as a minister, but only as the worthiest man breathing. He has not yet been paid his whole salary. I believe Madame de Vins will soon go to Saint Germain's, Madame de Richelieu begged she would: now I pity her, in being obliged to make so sad a journey as this must be to her: I cannot yet reconcile myself to this mortifying disgrace. My son has never yet writ to me, he has not yet returned to Nantz: had till now taken the whole upon myself, by giving out he was gone about my affairs*; but now I begin to sink under Mons. de la Trousse's bitter reproaches, who tells me, I ought first to have caused him to sell his place, that he might have nothing else to do but to be my intendant. I persuade myself, my son will return when I least think of it, and that in eight days time he will entirely disappear. The Ladies belonging to the Dauphiness, are to set out on the 25th for Seleslat. The Chevalier was at the wedding, it will be his own fault if you have not a fine account of it from him. The handsome Fontanges never appeared at it, they say she is inconsolable for the death of a little body. Adieu, my dearest, loveliest girl, I embrace your children, and mine, and those of Mons. de Grignan.

* See letter 12 January p. 368.

LETTER CCCCLXXXV.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 6 January, 1680.

HERE is a fit of illness which lasts a great while, and which I guess must be a very troublesome one. There is nobody who has not been more or less affected with a pain in the stomach; but that which you complain of lies in so intimate and so inward a part, and you suffer to such a degree, my dear child, that I have always, and still do admire your meekness and patience. I see very well it is not from any want of repose; you have been extremely well managed; your walks have light on the most charming days which have ever been seen; so that all your ails come from that breast, that blood, and those lungs of yours.

I am exceeding happy the council I gave you, from Mons. de Fagon, to eat more heartily, has succeeded so well *. This kind of regimen, for persons of tender and delicate complexions, is now much used. It depends on you, to come to what resolution you think proper as to the use of milk. Mons. de Grignan has done me the greatest pleasure imaginable, in making mention of my little Marquis; I have a vast friendship for him: as for Paulina, one cannot help being enamoured of her, she appears to me the most charming creature in the universe. Mons. de Mêmes spoke of her to me the other day exactly in this stile; I fancy he was then just come from seeing her: both husband and wife, are still full of the hearty welcome and polite reception you gave them. Mademoiselle de la Basiniere is become a recluse too, exactly such another as Mademoiselle de la Fayette; certain family interests, and a very ill temper, have been the cause of this retirement, which proved extremely irksome to her. My son is not yet arrived at Nantz; as I have already said but too much on this head, I will say no more of it now. He had been here two months since, had he retrenched from his journey, the days he has bestowed on the enchanting

* See letter, 8 December, page 342.

pleasures

pleasures he found in Lower Britany. He is gone to pass his holidays fifty leagues from Nantz. He went through Saint-Brien, the Bishop of which is appointed to the Bishoprick of Poitiers. I am always attentive to your news about bishopricks on our handsome Abbe's account. The household of the Dauphiness sets out to-morrow to meet that Princess, whose physiognomy did not promise too great happiness. She * who loves you so much, must needs, in my humble opinion, be an amiable Princess to retain so good a taste, at so great a distance, and so long after. Madame de Solre is not at Paris, if she had been there, I fancy she would have sent me word, or I should have some way or other have heard of her. The Princess de Conti is still a charming creature. She is in good health, and they tell wonders of the Prince of Conti's goodness of heart and generosity; he throws about his money like a hero, has all the obligingness of Henry IV. the uprightness of the Chevalier Bayard, and the justice of a Sylla: in short they reckon you up five or six wonderful qualities. Madame de Buri was received by the King, in a manner much exceeding her most sanguine expectation. He recommended his daughter to her care, for so he always calls her, and loves her most tenderly. He has given a salary of two thousand crowns to this same Buri, who that very day took her seat in the Queen's coach: with this fauce, 'tis one of the best places about court: what she may expect to come from the Condé family, will consist of presents; but she is immediately dependant on the King. Now is Madame de Langeron's time, to try whether she can obtain the honour of the Queen's coach, which she lost through the family of Condé's means. It is a difficult matter to form a proper judgment of a person's conduct; Madame de Buri, full fifty leagues from court, is carried away to fill a place which has been made exceeding advantageous. Madame de S. G. has only licked the outside of the pitcher, and got nothing. Mons. de Saint Brieu in his diocese, is translated to Poitiers, according to his wishes; whilst others, who attended at the King's mass in ranks, like so

* Anne Elizabeth de Lorraine, Princess de Vaudmont.

many strings of onions, have had only their labour for their pains: what consequence can we draw from this? but that every thing goes as God would have it. Paulina and I are still the dupes of this erroneous opinion, she answered your letter in this strain. Mons^r. de Saint Omer * is cured by the Englishman. The Duchefs de Saint Aignan † lies dead through him; it is true, his medicine was not administered till she was in the last agonies. Her husband is returned post from Havre, on the old wings of his old passion. He arrived as she was just expiring, kissed her hands, shrieked, and groaned; he is going to give us a touch of a *Sierra Morena* in his retirement and mourning. Here is Madame de Livri ‡ in great affliction, she has lost her all. I have seen Madame de Coulanges, she embraces you, and seems much pleased with your way of corresponding. She has been at Saint Germain's, where she was continually carressed, not to say spoiled. She was in some disfavour with the Countess de Grammont; the Abbé Tettu, though he had given over visiting her, has yet used his best endeavours to make up the affair, and he has succeeded. The Dauphin asked Mons^r. de Montausieur, when he thought the Dauphiness would be with child? They are to be married to-morrow at Munich; he is of opinion, as I take it, that ceremony may be performed on their arrival at Selerhadt: the Prince, her brother, is to espouse her. They have sent from hence the magnificent dresses which the elector had ordered for himself and his sister; but in much smaller quantity than he wanted, as nothing can equal the magnificence that Princess had been led to go into, by means of the Lady gard^e d'honneur de Rochefort. The Lady of honour, the Ladies of the presence, the young women, the gentlemen, in short, the whole household sets out to-morrow. Madame de Coulanges is at present in the whirl of preparation for their departure, they are all at Paris.

* Anne Tristran de la Baume Suze, afterwards Archbishop of Auch.

† Antoinette-Servien, wife of Francis de Beauville, Duke of Saint Aignan.

‡ Marie-Antoinette de Beauvillie, wife of Louis Sangnin, Marquis of Livri.

I am now to let you know a very tragical story. This poor B——, for the punishment of her past sins, is become passionately fond of the insensible C——. He saw her take fire, without the smallest effort to defend herself from the contagion: he lost not a moment, but came at once to the point, caused her to pawn her jewels; to enable him to hold out a little longer at basset. He was seen to come to Madame de Saint Quintin's, with a thousand louis, which he chinked all the way; his extreme gratitude compelled him to tell where he had them. This way of proceeding has so sensibly affected la B——, that she has become, as formerly, stupid with surprize; so that her blood and spirits, being perfectly stagnated, she is now actually bloated and gangreen'd, and I may say at death's door. The little Coulanges and I, went there yesterday; they look every moment for her giving up the ghost, where she will be but poorly lamented; the father and her husband both sincerely wish her in her warm grave. Here are now differing opinions, about the fine cause of her death. Madame de Frontenac seems perfectly ashamed for it, as well as the rest of the sex, who ought, in justice to themselves, to tear the guilty C—— limb from limb, like another Orpheus. I assure you, he shall never be my hero; I am in as great a passion with him, as Madame de Coulanges is with la Fare; she never now takes any notice of him, and tells the world, in plain terms, he has cheated her; she is the only one alive who is sorry for it. La Sabliere has acted like a pretty sensible body. My hatred to C——, is far from springing from the same source, as you may very plainly perceive; for I cannot ever say he has cheated; *inde-*

Wednesday, six in the evening.

My long letter is sent away; but in case of extraordinary news, we must needs write them, though you may possibly receive information of them from others. I must tell you then, that the Countess de Soissons is this night set out for Liege, or for some other part not belonging to the dominions of France. Her neighbour observed her very nicely, I imagine his Majesty has given her time to retire. Monsi. de Luxembourg has voluntarily

voluntarily committed himself prisoner to the Bastile, and thinks himself sure enough of his own innocence to act in this manner. They begin to talk of Madame de Tingois, and several others besides; but it is all a chaos of uncertainty, tho' what I send you, is real matter of fact; on Friday you may expect the remainder.

The Countess has been summoned to appear *within three short days*, that is to say, she is to take her trial for contumacy. The King said to Madame de Carignan; "Madame, I could have been glad the Countess could have cleared herself; possibly I may one day be able to satisfy God and my people of the sincerity of my intentions." And with regard to the apartment Madame de Carignan requested for her, the King made answer, he had already taken order about it.

L E T T E R CCCCLXXXVI.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday, 26 January, 1680.

I BEGIN my letter with the favourite article, the state of your health, the only thing in this world that gives me any manner of concern. All I see and hear in relation to the affairs of this life, are incapable of extirpating this so natural a thought; I consider as being so much the nearer to, or the farther removed from me, as they are more or less connected with you: even what little attention I bestow on news, is wholly owing unto you. I find you are well cloathed, and well sheltered from the cold, my dear child; you are out of this whirlwind, so that I am perfectly easy in regard to your repose; but then I am by no means so, in regard to that heaviness, and those heats you are troubled with; and then again that pain you undergo, with north easterly winds, or any extraordinary fatigue. I could be glad to have a little farther information in regard to this particular, which is to me of so much importance: such a deal of care and concern as every body has about you, cannot be wholly owing to pure precaution, nor altogether groundless. I wish you may be sincere in your resolution, no longer to be

the death of yourself, with that *escrutoire* of yours; confirm me, I beseech you, in this good opinion I have of you, and be sure you never any more write me such long letters, as Montgobert has so good a hand at it; and, as I have already told you, may also save you the trouble of dictating. I could wish too, she would now and then slip in a word or two of her own, in relation to the state of your health.

I have at last received a letter from my son, who is at Nantz. He was but twenty days on the road, he did but travel ninety leagues off Britany in the month of January, to pass the holidays, and with not one grain of love in his noddle. I have writ to him to take care how he tells this story to others, and that to save his reputation, he ought to alledge some flame, real or false; otherwise he will appear more a Breton than the Bretons themselves. I have also entreated him not to make any stay at Nantz, on account of any affairs of mine; they are without any appearance of probability, and I should be sorry to pass for so silly or so covetous a creature, as to prefer affairs, which are of no sort of consequence, to the necessity of his paying his attendance on court, on such an occasion as the present. He seems to me to be under some embarrassment; but will, in a word, return soon enough to set out with *Mons. de Chaulness*: mark my goodness, I have secured him a place in his coach. In good troth, I had really forgot little *de Genor*, I leave the care of such antediluvians to such folks as you and your worthy brother. Had it not been for the sake of *Mademoiselle*, I should have renounced *Mademoiselle d'Eperon*; I said that day, as indeed I do every day of my life, those foolish things you are pleased to call pretty thoughts, which is saying as much as one well can to qualify them; you would have to be distinguished from this class, what I said the other day to *Madame de Richlieu* *, to which I give you my consent with all my heart, as it has so great a resemblance of what *Mons. de Grignan* would have said, and I thought as much at the time. This is exactly one of those things which drop from him, when-

* See letter 5 January.

ever he speaks or writes; and it is owing to this cause, his letters are for months the ornament of every packet. Madame de Coulanges had her's the other day, and then the watch; is not this a merry thing enough? Besides, my dear, never trouble your head so much with what you are or ought to be, so much as to forget it is your duty to be here sometimes. It is not only your native country, but Monf. de Grignan's likewise: and I should pass my time exceeding heavily, did I not hope to have the pleasure to see you both here this year. Monf. de Rennes * reserves your apartment for you, tho' for all that he will allow us full time enough to set it to rights. You have no sort of obligation to me, for this acquaintance; let me say he merits a better title, 'tis the most estimable person living; he is as light as a feather, and so are every one about him; his conversation is easy, he is seldom to be seen, is for ever trotting up and down, and has no aversion at being alone in his study; his company is much sought after, and he has not the least resemblance to the late Monf. de Mans †. In short, his value is such, that were one to wish for any other companion in the world besides yourself, it must be just such an one as he. He has often begged me to offer his compliments to you, and to tell you that however satisfied he is with his present situation, he has too great a regard for me, not to wish he might be obliged to yield it up to you.

There is no more talk about Madame de S——, she even seems forgotten already. In fact, there is a world of other business to employ ones time at present; and I fancy I am silly enough to venture on some other topic. These have been two days, in which there has been business enough on hand; 'tis an everlasting bustle, sending to enquire the news, making of visits, on purpose to learn what is passing, for ever curious to know more of it; and what

† Jean Baptiste de Beaumanoir, Bishop of Rennes, who at this time lodged in Madame de Grignan's apartment, in the hotel de Carnavalette.

‡ Philibert Emanuel de Beaumanoir, Bishop of Mans, died July, 1671. He was cousin germain to Monf. de Rennes.

is the fruit of all this? Why I am going to tell you, till such time as somewhat newer comes to hand. Monsf. de Luxembourg was at Saint Germain's on Wednesday, the King frowning as much as ever: he was told, there was a warrant issued to apprehend him: he asked, to be permitted to speak to the King; you may form a guess what people said on the occasion. The King told him, that if he were innocent, he had nothing further to do, than to throw himself voluntary into prison, and that he had appointed such upright judges, to make enquiry into affairs of this kind, that he left every thing to their disposal. Monsf. de Luxembourg immediately took coach, and went to father la Chaile; Mesdames de Lavardin and de Mouri met him, as they were coming here, in a very melancholy mood, in the rue Saint Honoré: after passing an hour at the convent of the Jesuits, he repaired to the Bastile, and delivered to Barsémaux *, the order he brought from Saint Germain's. He was at first shewn into a tolerably handsome chamber. Madame de Meckelbourg † came there to visit him, and almost melted with weeping; about an hour after she left him, there came an order to confine him in one of those horrible places, in one of the towers, with the windows closed with iron bars, and to suffer no one to see him. Here, daughter, is copious matter of reflection: do but think within yourself of the splendid fortune of a person of his rank and merit, the honour of commanding in chief the King's armies, and then figure to yourself what thoughts, on hearing those grating bolts shut upon him, and, if it were really possible for him to sleep, guess what his thoughts must be when he awoke. Nobody thinks there was any thing of poison in his affair. It is, I do assure you, a most singular unhappiness, and such as may obliterate a number of other misfortunes. Madame de Tingres is under a subpoena to give evidence in the trial. As for the Countess de Soissons, she could not endure the thoughts of a prison, they were willing to allow her time to make her escape, if she really were guilty. She

* Governor of the Bastile.

† Sister to Monsf. de Luxembourg.

was playing at basset on the Wednesday, when Monf. de Bouillon came in; he begged her to step with him into her closet, where he told her, she must either leave France, or go to the Bastile; she was not long in determining what to do. She immediately called the Marchioness d'Allure from the card-table, and they have never appeared since. When the hour of supper came, they were told the Countess supped in town; the whole company broke up, in an opinion something extraordinary had happened. In the mean time, a number of parcels are packed up, with money, jewels, &c. the lacquies and coachmen are ordered to wear gray liveries, to put eight horses to the coach. She made the Marchioness d'Allure, who they say refused to go, sit behind, on the same side with her, and two chambermaids before. She told her people not to be uneasy on her account, that she was innocent, but that the vile women *, had taken a pleasure in giving in her name; she wept, went to Madame de Carignan's, and left Paris at three in the morning. 'Tis said she is gone to Namur, you may assure yourself nobody wants to go after her. She will, notwithstanding, be tried in her absence, were it only to clear her reputation to the world; there is a large fund of detraction in what La Voisine says. It is believed the Duke de Villeroy † is much troubled at it; he keeps his room, and sees not a soul. Perhaps I may be able to tell you something farther about it, before I close this letter.

Madame de Vibraye has fallen to the old trade of devotion ‡: God, as you very well remarked, would not suffer her to pass her whole life in the company of her enemies. Madame de Buri has turned the clack of her talking-mill with abundance of address. If the Princess is to be seen at Paris, Madame de Vins desires I would keep her company when she goes there. Pomenars has been cut §, did I tell you? I have seen him, it is really

* La Voisine and her associates in the witchcrafts, &c.

† Francis Neuville, afterwards Marshal of France.

‡ See letter 12 January, page 368.

§ See the letter of 12 January, page 368.

pleasant to hear him talk of all those various poisons ; one is almost tempted to tell him, is it possible this one crime alone should be wholly unknown to you ? Volonne gives his opinion, without any hesitation, and admires how any body could keep up a correspondence with these *vile women*. The Queen of Spain is in some measure as much confined as Monsf. de Luxembourg. Madame de Villars wrote Madame de Coulanges the other day, that were it not for her great love to Monsf. de Villars, she would not have consented to pass the winter at Madrid. She gives Madame de Coulanges many pleasant and entertaining accounts of things, as she is persuaded she will go no further. I am overjoyed to have the pleasure of perusing them, without the trouble of answering them. Madame de Vins thinks as I do. Monsf. de Pomponne is gone for a breathing to Pomponne, where he is to remain three days ; he received all, and given up all, so that affair is finished. He really gives me pain to hear him always asking what news ? He is as much a stranger to what is passing, as one living on the banks of the Marne : he is in the right to quiet his mind, as much as lies in his power. My own, as well as the Abbé's, was much moved to find you write with your own hand ; you did not apprehend it, my dear child, but I will assure you, it was a thing impossible to read it with dry eyes. Good God ! you pronounce that person, who thinks of nothing but you, as good for nothing, and wholly an incumbrance to the earth ; do but think of the consequences your talking at this rate may produce. I do beseech you never henceforth to say any ill of your humour. Your heart and mind are too perfect, to suffer any such slight shadows to be taken notice of : do but be a little more tender of truth and justice, as well as of the sole object of my vows and prayers. I shall think myself really dead, till I have the satisfaction to see you.

L E T-

L E T T E R CCCCLXXXVII.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 31 January, 1680.

IT is a thing impossible for me to behold your own hand writing, without a most sensible emotion. I well know the harm this must do you, and notwithstanding you write me the tenderest and most amiable thing in nature, I regret exceedingly the purchase of that satisfaction, at the expence of your breast; I know perfectly well, it is still far from well. You tell me the weather is extremely mild, that you take no manner of fatigue, and that you write less than your ordinary; whence then proceeds this obstinacy? You are dumb on that head, and Montgobert has the cruelty, tho' she has the pen in her hand, not to say one word about it. Good God! of what signification is all beside, and what pleasure can I taste, from hearing of all the rejoicing at your city of Aix, when I find you are obliged to go to bed at eight in the evening? But you may tell me, so then you would have me sit up late and fatigue myself; no, my dearest, God forbid I should be capable of forming so depraved a wish; but when you were here, you was not utterly incapable of relishing and enjoying the sweets of society. I have at last seen Monsr. de Gardes; he told me, with abundance of sincerity, you was in a very low languishing state in the boat, and that you were much better at Aix: but then, with the same *naivette*, he assures me, that the air of Provence is too subtile, too piercing, and too drying, in your present condition. When one is in health, we put up with any thing, and nothing then comes amiss; but when one's breast is attacked, and when one is thin and delicate, as you are, one runs the risque of putting it out of one's power to recover ever after. Do not tell me any more, that the tenderness of that breast of your's, is in proportion to our advance years. Ah! God forbid the order, which has been established by providence, and which is so agreeable to nature and reason, and

which is at the same time so dear to me, should undergo any change in regard to us.

I must resume the article of news, which I always suffer to sleep awhile, when I get upon the chapter of your welfare. Mons. de Luxembourg has been two days without eating; he asked for several Jesuits, but has been refused every one of them: he asked to have the lives of the saints, and it has been given him; you see he is at a loss *to which of the saints he shall devote himself*. He was interrogated for four hours on the Friday or Saturday, I cannot now recollect which; after that, he appeared somewhat much easier in his mind, and eat some supper. It is believed he had done better to have made his innocence take the field, and to have left word he would return, when his natural judges should * think fit to summon him. He has done a sensible prejudice to the order of dukedom in acknowledging this court; but he was willing to yield a blind obedience to the commands of his Majesty. Mons. de Cessac has followed the example of the Countess. Mesdames de Bouillon and de Tingris were interrogated on Monday at the chamber of the arsenal. Their noble families attended them to the gate: there is not as yet any appearance of any blackness in the follies which have been laid to their charge, not even so much as a dark grey. Should nothing farther be discovered, here is a world of scandal, which might very well have been spared, especially against families of their high quality. Marshal de Villeroi † says, these Gentlemen and Ladies do not believe in God, though they believe in the Devil. In reality, there is a deal of ridiculous nonsense, related in regard to the private transactions of these abominable women. The Lady Marshal de L. F. who is so properly named, went out of complaisance (to la Voisin's) with the Countess, but did not go up stairs; Mons. de Langres accompanied the Lady Marshal, this is very black: this affair has given her a pleasure not very common with her, which is, to hear she is inno-

* The parliament of Paris.

† Nicholas de Neufville, Marshal Duke de Villeroy, father to the last Marshal of that name.

cent. The Duchefs de Bouillon went to ask la Voisin for a small dose of the poison, to kill an old tiresome husband she had, with a nostrum, to marry a young man she was fond of. This young man was Mons. de Vendome, who led her by one hand, and Mons. de Bouillon, her spouse, by the other. When a *Mancine* is only guilty of a piece of folly like this, information is given of it; and these witches explain all this according to the severity of the letter, and terrify all Europe with a mere bagatelle. The Countess de Soissons asked, whether she might not be enabled to recover a lover who had left her: this lover was a great Prince; and it is asserted, that unless he returned to her, she would make him repent his ingratitude: this is understood to be the King, and every thing is of consequence that has any relation to this subject; but let us examine the consequence; if she has committed any greater crime, she has not mentioned it to these baggages. One of our friends says, there is an elder branch of the poisoners, to which they never re-ascend, as this is not a native of France. What we have here are only your small cadets, without shoes to their feet. La T. gives us to understand, there is somewhat of greater consequence behind, as she was school-mistresses to the novices. She says she admires the world: they really believe she has had children by Mons. de L. alas! God knows whether she has; in short, the present prevailing opinion is, the innocence of the persons named, and an universal horror of the defamation; to-morrow it may be quite the reverse. You know well enough the nature of these general opinions; I shall give you a faithful account of them; it is the only subject of conversation here. In short, there is no example of such a scandal in any court of Christendom. It is said la Voisin put all the infants, whose abortion she had procured, into an oven; and Madame de Coulanges, as you may well imagine, when she speaks of la T. constantly says, it was for her the oven was heating.

I had a long chat yesterday with Mons. de la Rochefoucault, on a chapter on which we have discoursed already. There is nothing to oblige you to write; but

he conjures you to believe, that what could give the highest satisfaction to nature, would be to have it in his power to contribute to your changing the place of your residence, should a fit occasion offer. I never in my life saw so obliging, or so amiable a man.

This I have from a good hand. Madame de Bouillon entered this chamber like some petty Queen, sat down on a chair placed there on purpose for her, and instead of answering to the first question that was asked her, she demanded, that what she should say, might be taken down in writing; that, " Her sole reason for coming there, was from the respect she bore the King's order, and by no means in obedience to the court, which she in no shape acknowledged, as she would by no means derogate from the privileges of the Dukedom." She uttered not a word but what was taken down, when taking off her glove, she discovered a very delicate and fine hand; her answers were very sincere, even the article of her age not excepted. Know you la Vigoureux? *No.* Know you la Voisin? *Yes.* What reason had you to desire the death of your husband? *I desire! I desire the death of my husband! you need only ask him whether he believes one syllable of it. He led me by the hand to the very gate.* But what was your reason for so often visiting la Voisin? *Because I wanted to see those Sibyls she promised me I should see; a company which certainly well deserved all this noise and scrutiny.* Did you not show that woman a bag of money? She answered, I did not, and for more reasons than one; and all with a smiling, and at the same time a disdainful countenance. *Well, gentlemen, have you done with me?* Yes, Madame. She rose up, and as she was going out, said loud enough to be heard, I really never could have believed, they could have taken the trouble to ask so many frivolous questions. She was received by the whole of her friends, relations of either sex, with adoration, for her handsome, easy natural, bold, sensible, and unconcerned appearance. As for la T. she was by no means near so gay. Monf. de L. is perfectly disconcerted: he is neither man nor dwarf, not even a woman; but if I may be permitted the expression, I would christen him a womanikia.

womanikin. *Shut this window, light a fire, give me some chocolate, hand me that book, I have abandoned God, and God has abandoned me.* This is the behaviour he shewed before Baifemeaux and his commissaries, with his countenance covered with a mortal paleness. When one has nothing better than this to carry to the Bastile, one had better gain some more time, as the King, with infinite goodness, had put it into his power to do, till the very moment he committed himself: but there is a necessity to have recourse to providence, in spite of all our efforts to the contrary; it was by no means natural to behave as he has done, being a creature of such weakness as he appears to be*. I was this day informed, Madame de Meckelbourg did not see him: and la T. who came with him from St. Germain's, never intended any more than himself, to give Madame de Meckelbourg the least notice of it, though he had time enough to have done it, if he were inclined; but la T. kept every body from seeing him, and kept so close, that not a soul came to him except herself. I have been to see this Meckelbourg at the nunnery of the holy Sacrament, where she has retired. She is under great affliction, and complains loudly of la T. whom she blames for all her brother's misfortunes. I made your compliments to her by way of anticipation, and assured her, you would be exceeding sorry at her ill-fortune; she expressed a world of regard for you. One might, at this time, that no body dreams of any thing, do almost what one would at Paris. Madame de S—— is entirely forgotten; and as for the sufferings of that poor creature B——, I am really altogether at a loss what has become of her. However, I cannot help thinking of my poor Adhemar, poor child! how I pity her jealousy! do you, daughter, pity her with me? I am prodigiously moved on her account.

* Madame de Sévigné seems to have adopted, at this time, the ridiculous reports spread abroad, in regard to M. de Luxembourg: yet, is it to be believed, that a soul like his, was capable of that wretched behaviour laid to his charge? And should they not rather have discerned in it the common conduct of envy and ill-will, who, in the life-time of men in the first rank, are incessantly endeavouring to tarnish the lustre of their reputation.

L E T T E R CCCCLXXXVIII.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday, 2 February, 1680.

SHOULD I as easily yield to the temptation of hearing you talk in your letters, as you do to the love of prating, it would really be diverting: I should then amuse myself with the little boys battle, which you relate in four lines, in the most entertaining manner imaginable; you are no very eminent hand at narration; but I do take it upon me to say, there is not a better hand at abridging a relation again in the known world. I can easily see you were diverted with the little boy, who thinks he has fought like a hero. The good sense of the little Marquis pleases me highly. You represent to me exceedingly well, the different sentiments of the Mademoiselles de Grignan on the occasion. What you say of Paulina is incomparable, as well as the use you make of your tenderness and delicate constitution, to get rid of the pleasures of the carnival. I shall never forget the haste you were in to divert yourself, as speedily as possible, before the carnival, by way of medicine, that you might quickly enjoy the repose of Lent. Your people, whether *singular* or *plural*, give you a deal of relief, and act their parts to a miracle. There is no doubt, but to hear you explain yourself in regard to this weighty affair, would be a thing merry enough; but still, daughter, I expect this temptation by this consideration, that nothing can be more pernicious to you than writing; I therefore conjure you, never henceforth to amuse yourself with writing me so long a letter as the last time, except you wish to have me reduce my letters to half a page; and this with an intention to demonstrate to you, that you will oblige me to break off all manner of correspondence with you. I embrace Mons. de Grignan, since at length, with so much difficulty and address, you have forced him to forgive me: and I do beseech him, as he tenders this our reconciliation, to see he shorten the
lines

lines I shall henceforth receive from you. It appears to me you have deceived him, as well as Mongobert, in the voluminousness of those you have writ me; I most earnestly intreat you, to beware of doing so for the future. Your reasonings concerning Madame de Saint Geran, is exceeding well-timed. Madame de Buri has been settled these three weeks, in the place you imagined Madame de Saint Geran had got. The Dauphiness is to have no Ladies: you know her Ladies of honour, and the Ladies of the presence, and this is the whole affair. They have been set out these eight days, with all her household for Selestat, and so are her women; they are all persons of high pedigree, but possessed of no extraordinary charms; Laval, les Bions, Tonerre, Rambure, and the honest Montchevreuil at their heels. The sixth place is left vacant for some German Lady, if the Dauphiness should think proper to bring one with her. The King treats the Princess of Conti with such a tender affection, as would do one's heart good to see: when she comes, he salutes and embraces her, talks with her, and gives full scope to his fondness for her; she is in effect his daughter, and he never calls her by any other name; you may imagine to yourself the consequences. *She is still mistress of every grace*, and grows very fast; she is no longer *superintendant* *, nor has she had a pension of a hundred thousand crowns; I have these two fibs on my conscience. You should read the Gazettes, they are very good, and are not at all flattering or exaggerated as heretofore: but a folly it is to talk of any thing but Madame de Voisin and Mons. le Sage!

Monsieur de Sévigné proceeds.

It is not Mons. le Sage who handles the pen, as you see. Here am I again, my pretty little sister, quite fixed at Paris, at my dear Mama's elbow; I have not yet been accused of being in the poison plot, which I do assure you, as times go, is no small degree of merit. I am still possessed of the same sentiments with regard to my little sister; for which reason, I ardently wish the return of your health, which obtained, we will then form some other wish at our leisure.

* Of the Queen's household.

Madame de Sévigné resumes.

He's come, that little rogue de Sévigné. I intended to have chid him, and to say truth, *I had all the reason in the world so to do*. I have even studied a homily on purpose, which I had divided into six heads, like de Vasse's harangue; but I don't know in what manner it has come to pass, but all is jumbled, and such a perfect medley of the serious and comical, that we know not what to make of it. The public still continues to blame the judges for their imprudent conduct, in giving grounds for so much noise, and in bringing such a scandal on such distinguished names on so trifling a foundation. Mons. de Bouillon asked leave of the King to print the interrogatories put to his wife, in order to send into Italy, and other parts of Europe, where people might possibly give credit to the report of his wife's being guilty of poisoning. Madam L. F. overjoyed to be found innocent, for once in her whole life, absolutely insisted on putting her to the test; and though she was wrote to not to come, yet she still must needs come, and her case was still more trifling than that of Madame de B. Feuquieres and Madame de Rontes, amounted to no more than the most venial matters: but here is a circumstance extremely disagreeable to the prisoners, which is, that the court does nothing for twenty days to come, neither takes any new informations, nor in causing those residing at a distance, against whom informations have been filed, to be brought before them; as for instance, that P—, who has been summoned to appear, as well as the Countess de S—. In short, here are twenty days of repose or despair; however, the Countess de S— gains ground, and does exceeding well: there is nothing equal to publishing in the face of the world one's crime, or one's innocence. I have been at infinite pains to be informed, that the poor Bertillac is dead.

L E T T E R CCCCLXXXIX.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 7 February, 1680.

CAN it then be true, daughter, that you learn to play at chess? As for my own part, I am quite besotted

besotted with this game *, and would give the world I could learn to play it like my son or you. It is the finest and most rational game of any ; chance has not the least to do in it, one blames or applauds one's self, and one has one's good luck entirely in one's head. Corbinelli would fain make me believe I shall acquire it ; he says, I have some little ideas and schemes of my own ; but I declare, I can never see what is to happen within three or four moves before it comes. I do assure you, I shall be quite confounded, and much humbled, if I do not at least arrive at a certain degree of mediocrity. All the world were playing at it at Pomponne, when I was there last, men, women, and children ; and while the master of the house was beating Mons. de Chaulnes, he met with a strange kind of *mat* at Saint Germain's. Madame de Vins passed part of the afternoon here yesterday, when we talked a great deal about this disagreeable adventure. The last affair of the courier is inexcusable †, it was a very unnatural kind of lethargy. I assure you, these kind of complaints are very easily renewed, when one allows one's self the liberty to think of them with freedom, and to speak of them without any kind of constraint.

I and all the Ladies, who are of the number of your acquaintances, attended at the service for this poor Bertillac ‡. It is beyond all doubt, that C. was the occasion of her death ; she was, in a certain time, when she was seized by means of the treatment you know of : she was struck dead, as it were with a dagger : C. is in the country. For my part, I look upon it as another S——'s affair. One is accused of a murder, and the other of witchcraft. In short, the planet of crimes seems to have the ascendant. They will fall to work again in that chamber § sooner than was expected. 'Tis said, there will be many persons confronted : we want something to rouse us, for we were fallen asleep, and this prodigious rumour has ceased till the first opportunity. There is no more talk

* See letter, 5th January, page 362.

† See letter, 6 December, page 337.

‡ See letter, 24 January, page 381.

§ The chamber Ardente, for trying the affair of the poisonings.
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of Mons. de Luxembourg ; I really admire how things turn about : it is indeed a torrent, that hurries every thing along with it. We are still promised, however, some curious scenes : he was on Monday exceeding melancholy, and the meaning of which you will be at a loss to comprehend. Mons. de Pomponne is at length gone to court ; he was greatly afraid of this journey ; you may form a guess what his thoughts were on the road, when he beheld the court, when he received the compliments of all the courtiers, with which he was perfectly overwhelmed. He was struck with it, and when he entered the chamber, where the King waited his coming, what could he say, or how begin ? The King assured him he had ever been satisfied of his fidelity, and his services ; that he was perfectly at ease in his mind as to all the secrets he was in the knowledge of ; and that he would give him and his family proofs of his goodness. Mons. de Pomponne could not help shedding some tears, when he mentioned the misfortune he had to incur his displeasure : he added, that with respect to his family, he left it entirely to his Majesty's goodness ; that his only grief was the being removed from the service of a master, to whom he was attached, as well by inclination as duty ; that it was next to impossible not to feel in all its severity so heavy a loss ; that this pierced him to the quick, and obliged him to give those marks of weakness, which he hoped his Majesty would forgive. The King told him he was sensibly moved at them, that they proceeded from so good a bottom, that he ought not to be offended at them. The whole discourse turned on this, and Mons. de Pomponne came with his eyes somewhat red, and with the looks of one who had not merited his misfortune. He told me all this yesterday in the evening ; he would have wished he could have put on a firmer countenance, but could not get the better of his emotion. This is the only occasion in which he has ever appeared too much softened, though one might say he had paid his court to good purpose enough, had he any farther views there. He will soon recover his philosophy, and in the mean time, here is an affair of some importance concluded ; these
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are so many renewals of one's tenderness, which one cannot help feeling in some measure with him. Madame de Vins has been at Saint Germain's; good God, what a difference! She had abundance of compliments paid her; but to reflect that there was her home, where now she has not a corner to shelter her head in: I am sure I felt my share of what she underwent in that journey. Adieu, dearest, loveliest girl; I every moment expect to hear from you with the greatest impatience, but then see you write but a word or two at most; renounce writing for ever, and spare your poor Mama: it is most horrible to think, that those who love you, and who are beloved by you, should be the ruin of your health.

L E T T E R CCCCXC.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday, 9 February, 1680.

I SEE you have got into high carnival; you give little private suppers to eighteen or twenty Ladies; I am well acquainted with your way of living, and the extraordinary charge you live at in Aix; but yet, methinks, amidst all this bustle, you contrive to repose pretty well: one is apt to say sometimes, I'll e'en have a little pleasure for my money; but you, I fancy, say rather, I'll e'en have a little rest for my money: take your repose then, my dear, and reap at least this one advantage from your situation. I cannot help being a little surprised, the fiddle does not tempt you to a minuet sometimes; what! not once to move a step or two! quite insensible! it is not to be believed, it is against nature; I have never yet known you to have fit stock still on these occasions, and, were I to draw such conclusions from this, as I commonly do, I should imagine you much worse than you say you are.

There was yesterday in the evening a most enchanting entertainment at the hotel de Condé. The Princess of Conti named one of the Duke's daughters, with the Prince de la Roche-sur Yon. First of all was the christening, and afterwards the baptismal collation; but then what a collation! then a play, but then what a play! wholly interspersed with fine pieces of music, and the best opera dancers.

cers. A theatre built by the faries; such perspectives, orange trees loaden with fruits and flowers, festoons, pilasters, scenes, and other decorations: In short, the whole expence of this short evening, cost no less than two thousand louis d'ors, all for the sake of the handsome Princess.

The opera (Proserpine) is beyond all others. The Chevalier tells me he has sent you several of the airs, and that he spoke with a gentleman *, who said he had sent you the words; I dare say you will like it. There is a scene in it †, where appear Mercury and Ceres, which requires no interpreter to be understood: it must have been approved of, since every body sings it, but you will judge for yourself.

The poisoning affair is quite forgot; here is no manner of news. The report goes, that there will be no more blood spilt; you will make your own reflections as we do. The Abbé Colbert is made Coadjutor of Roan. They talk of a journey into Flanders. No body knows what this assembling of the forces mean.

Friar Ange has raised Marshal de Bellefond from the dead; he has cured his breath that was quite gone. Madame de Coulanges and I have been to visit the Grand Master §, who has been almost at death's door this fortnight past; his gout had ascended, add to this an oppression, so as to make one believe he was every moment ready to deliver up the ghost, cold sweats, light-headedness; in short, he was as bad as man could be. The physicians could give him no relief; he sent for Friar Ange, who has cured him, and brought him from the very gates of death, by the gentlest and most agreeable medicines; the oppression went off; the gout fell back into his knees and feet, and now he is out of all manner of danger.

Farewel, my dear child, I still lead the life you saw me, either in the suburbs, or with my good widow; and sometimes I am here and sometimes I pick a bit of chicken with Madame de Coulanges; but always pleased

* Quinault.

† See the second scene of the first act.

§ The Duke de Lude,

to think I am gliding down the stream with old time, and so hastening the happy moment when I shall see you once again.

L E T T E R CCCCXCI.

To the same.

Paris, Wednesday 14 February, 1680.

I THINK you extreme fortunate in the company of Madame de Janet, who is come on purpose for you ; here is an acquaintance I am hugely pleased with. I am fully persuaded her whole employment will be to take care of your health ; I beseech you to make her my most hearty compliments. You give yourself very little concern about the vanities of this world ; I think I see you constantly retiring and going to bed, leaving the rest to sing and dance by themselves : you take your repose for your money, as I told you the other day.

Montgobert has told me, in a very pleasant manner, the manœuvres of the beauteous Iris, and the jealousy of Mon. the Count ; I dare say he will often see the moon a teté a teté with this beauty ; he has revenged himself for the nonce, by a very pretty song. Montgobert made me laugh at her regard for Mons. de Grignan.

The gendarmes are quite bewildered. My son goes to Flanders, and does not go to meet the Dauphiness. The army is assembling, they say to take Charlemont. We know nothing for certain, except that the officers are going to the army, and this in a month's time ; there will be an army of fifty thousand men on foot. The Chevalier's regiment is none of them.

The chamber of the arsenal are fat again. There was one of them, but they do not mention his name, who said to Mons. de Reinie ; " But, Sir, as far as I
" see, we are got to work here only on your sorceries
" and witchcraft, and such devilish stuff, whereof the
" parliament of Paris never takes cognizance. Our
" commission is to try the crime of poisoning ; how
" comes it we enquire after any thing else ? " Le Reinie, in surprise, said, " Sir, we have secret orders." Sir, replied the other, " Do but be so good as to communicate those orders to us, and we will obey them as well

“ well as you ; but, as we are without your lights, I
“ hope I speak but what is agreeable to reason and
“ justice, in saying what I now say.” I have a notion
you will not blame this man’s honesty, tho’ he refuses
to be known. There are so many persons of worth
belonging to this chamber, as you would scarcely believe.

The little Prince of Leon was baptized yesterday at
Saint Gervais, by a Bishop of Britany ; Mons. de
Rennes stood godfather, as representing the states of
Britany ; the Duchess was godmother. The Governor
of Britany, Messieurs the Lieutenant Generals of Bri-
tany, the Treasurer of Britany, Messieurs the Deputies
of Britany, several Lords of Britany, with the Presi-
dents of Britany, father and son : in short, had there
been a dance, I dare say it would have been no other
than the Britany passe-pied’s ; nay, they would have
eaten Burgundy butter had it been a meagre day. I
do assure you, my son feels all the power of that se-
cret pleasure which attracts the Bretons into their
country, for he is returned perfectly enchanted with
it. Tonqueduc has begun, for the first time in all his
life, to be admired, and to appear worthy of imitation :
it would be like stopping the Rhone in his course, to
pretend to oppose this torrent, which would even make
him almost sell his place : he has begun with telling
Gourville, and several others, before he mentioned it
to me. He gives several very good reasons, he sees and
fears the approaching disgusts which may fall out by
Mons. de la Trouffe’s means ; he is sorry on account of
those who are appointed to the gendarmie, and has no
fancy to be ruined : the sum of the matter is, by thus
discovering the bottom of his heart, he would reduce
us to the necessity of saying yes, most assuredly, he is
perfectly in the right to sell his place. I cannot re-
proach myself with concealing what my duty obliged
me to say on this subject of so odd a resolution, in
which I unburdened myself with that frailty which
sometimes attends me. I desired him to wait for at least
some pretext, some shadow of dissatisfaction : in short,
to stay for somewhat that may keep his real thoughts
undiscovered, but all to no purpose ; for all Mons. de
la Garde and I have been able to do, is no more than
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to beg he would never meddle in such an affair. We are overjoyed at his absence, as it may be a means of preventing his doing a prejudice to his affairs, by discrediting his own wares with his own mouth. I told him it was really very unlucky, to purchase commissions only by mere whim and caprice; to pay an excessive price to be Guidon, because he was besotted of it; and next to nothing for a Sub-lieutenancy, because, forsooth, he had conceived some disgust at the office. Thus it is that people buy and sell, for want of sense and knowledge of business. Adieu, my dearest, do not be at all uneasy on this account; let us adore the dispensations of providence, whose kindness sends us no greater subject of complaint; I shall still possess my mind in liberty, for I shall still be as much yours as ever, and this shall make no change in me, but quite the contrary.

All those who are to have the honour to attend the Dauphiness, are by this time at Selestat; Madame de Maintenon and the Bishop of Condom are separated from the company; they are gone to meet their Princess, as far as ground will carry them; that is, perhaps, three or four days journey. This is a very agreeable and evident distinction; should the Dauphiness take it into her head, to fancy all the rest of the company are to be possessed of an equal share of good sense with this sample, she will be egregiously deceived; it is, in fact, no small advantage to be of the first form. There was a sort of first form made at Madame de la Fayette's the other day; you were put in it without the smallest hesitation. Corbinelli said very obligingly for the rest, that in his opinion, there was no such thing as pretending to reason with any woman but you. It is a good patrimony, my dear child, to have a good and a solid understanding as you have; but a very bad one, as you say, to have all one's good sense locked up in the Bastile; one might pass one's time a great deal better in a cell in Bedlam. Farewell, though I leave you, I still have my thoughts occupied with you alone; but then with so much tenderness, with such a warmth of affection, and a heart so often pierced with your illness and your absence, that I am at a loss to say, whether a cell there would not be the best thing I could think of.

Mons.

Monf. de Luxembourg has been twice carried to the castle of Vincennes, in order to be confronted: the true state of his case is not yet known.

L E T T E R CCCCXCII.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday, 16 February, 1680.

I AM still, and with great justice, wholly occupied about your welfare. I have sent Mongobert a consultation I had the other day with Friar Ange. I fancied she might have it in her power to seize the proper time to prevail with you take the medicine in question, much better than my letter could have done. I waited for Mongobert's answer, that is to say, your own, but that only in case your milk did not agree with you. Possibly you might have been kept too low for it, or else your blood might be still too much heated, to unite with the coldness of the milk; for, had it been proper for you, you had been well ere now. Friar Ange was perfectly sensible of the effect of this opposition, it is like water thrown upon too hot a skin. This is what Fagon says, and what you have experienced: it is your business to judge whether your blood be still in the same degree of heat; since in that case, Friar Ange's medicines, which are milder, strengthening, and refreshing, might be of service in rendering your body in a proper condition, to make use of your milk diet, and possibly cure you, as it has the Marshal de Bellefond, the Queen of Poland, and a thousand besides. They are very easy and pleasant to take; and supposing unhappily, they should happen to do you no service, you may rest assured they never can do you any harm. Du Chêne has still a mortal hatred for coffee; the Friar thinks it pretty inoffensive. It is true, Madame de Sabliere took tea with her milk; she told me so the other day, it was her particular taste; for she thought coffee a very good thing to take. The physician you esteem, and, who for that very reason, I dare say, deserves it, advises you to use it; ah! daughter, what is there left for me to say on this head? or how can I pretend to determine whether I say right or wrong? We very often blame what is the properest

properest thing in the world, and make choice of what is most pernicious, and at best but grope in the dark. I have this to accuse myself of, that I recommended the use of coffee to you, at a time when it was far from being proper for you. Can it be an essential towards a medicine's having a proper effect, that it be taken as a medicine, but that if otherwise, it can have no sort of efficacy? Caderouse is for ever a praising it; coffee makes some folks fat, whilst on others it has quite a contrary effect: here's a world of absurdity. I don't see how it is possible to say any thing positively of a thing, attended with such contrary effects; therefore, my dear girl, even follow your own inclination, and consult with your worthy physician: I shall, however, beg leave to ask him but this one question, which is, how it comes to pass, since your breast is not attacked, you have continually such an oppression and heat on the same side? why you are so chilly? and how it comes about you are so thin, especially your breast? Now, this is what makes me fear there is somewhat more the matter with you, than merely the ill state of your blood. Let me have an answer to these particulars by means of Madame du Janet, for as to Montgobert, she will have other affairs on her hands, besides that she is your amanuensis. You speak of my welfare; I am in the most perfect health, though not till after I had taken at least two of my pills, with a trifling quantity of the water. I have accustomed myself to take every morning a glass or two of linseed tea; by this means I shall never have any more nephretic complaints: France owes the preservation of Mons. de Colbert to this tea. I do not use any deception with regard to you; I have but one way to express my thoughts in to you; let me therefore beg of you to use the same sincerity towards me, in informing me of the true state of your health; for I can with great truth declare, my mind is wholly taken up about you, and you only.

Madame de Bouillon has gloried in the answers she made the Judges to such excellent purpose, that she has procured herself the favour of a downright *lettre de cachet*, enjoining her to take a trip to Kerac, at the foot of the Pyrenées; and accordingly she set out yesterday
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in great affliction. There is matter for abundance of reflections in this departure: if she be innocent, she is a great loser in being refused the pleasure of triumphing; if she is guilty, she is happy in shunning the infamy of being confronted, and possibly convicted. Her whole family have conducted her, like another Psyche, half a day's journey out of town. Now, she is exactly in the same situation with good Queen Margaret, in days of yore. Let us consider the four sisters, and what a wandering planet governs their fates! one sent into Spain, another into England, a third into England, and a fourth into the remotest parts of Guienne! Mons. d'Allui is sent into banishment to Amboise, for being too free of his tongue. There is nothing said of Mons. de Luxembourg, tho' he has been confronted; the Judges are silent on the affair. I am just now going to pay your compliments to Madame de Meckelbourg, who cries and frets most prodigiously.

Madame de Vins is the same lovely woman as ever, and loves you most tenderly, which augments her regard for me to a great degree, to my no small profit, and which, I therefore take all manner of pains to cultivate. Mons. de Pomponne is become one of us again, as formerly; he is going to the suburbs, and they begin to talk again of the times of the hotel de Nevers, with all the reflections, so natural, on occasion of the changes which have happened of late. My son is still as full of the notion of selling out as ever, and I am as bent on preventing this negotiation as ever; this affair does not lie so light on his stomach as other affairs have commonly done; though it has taken deep root, and I plainly perceive the soil of Britany at the bottom of it. I have but too plainly explained myself on these matters; he is fully persuaded I have told you of it; he expects your disapprobation of it, without the least concern for the firmness of his own resolutions: for my own part, as I cannot possibly do better, I beg him only to wait, till he has something like a colour of a pretext from Mons. de la Trousse: I will write you what turn his affairs take. Farewel, my dearest, farewell.

END of the SIXTH VOLUME.



